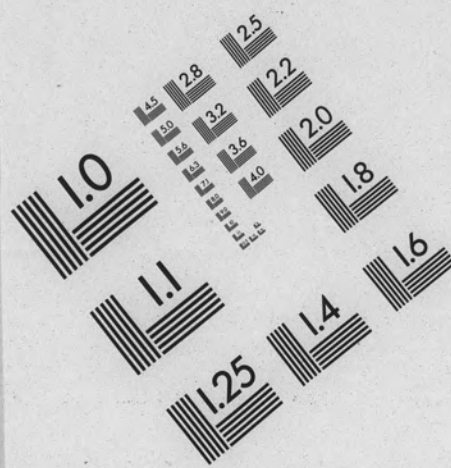


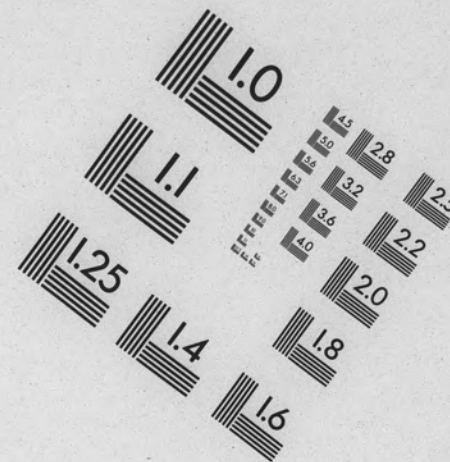
Journal, 1952.



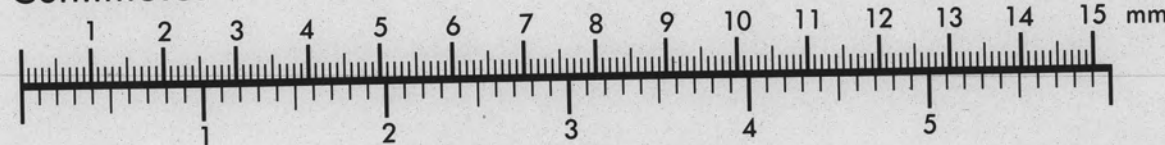
AIM

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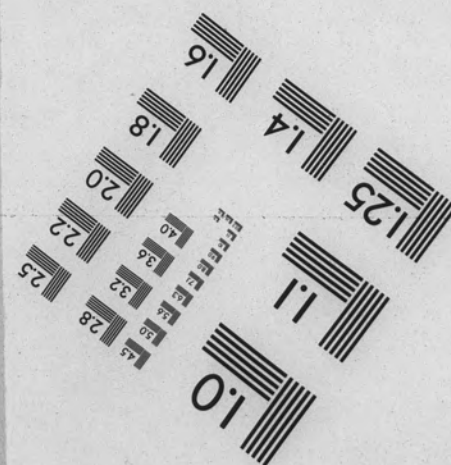
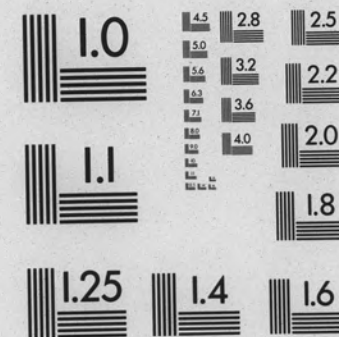
1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1100
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
301/587-8202



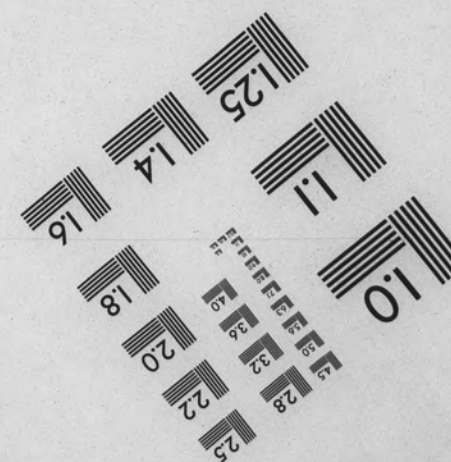
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BY APPLIED IMAGE, INC.



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THE JOURNAL OF FRANCOIS MIGNON

- 1952 -

5232

Tuesday, January 1st, 1952.

Memorandum:

At 5 o'clock this morning, the weather man reported a cold wave rolling southward, having already engulfed Fort Worth but not yet arrived at Dallas. It has been in the 80's here all day and tonight I have all doors and windows open, although the frigid mass is supposed to encompass us before morning.

The Payne Henrys brought pilgrims this morning and they ended up by remaining for dinner where we all gathered from across the ~~big~~ fence at the big house. It was a pleasant gathering and the food excellent. I had promised to take desert at the Band Camp and so marched across the cotton fields in that direction a half hour after dinner here, only to discover the Bands had held dinner for me. The board groaned at that bend of the river, too, but I somehow succeeded in fiddling out of most of the viands, save some oysters, a salade and coffee, while the 8 or 10 other guests made heroic inroads on the turkey and all the limitless other things.

Back at Yucca by 3, I was vaguely surprised at the coincidence or the planned advance made by 7 different local negroes, all of whom came on the same mission. The approach varied but it ran something like this for the most part:

"We done heard tell of that there plate you done made, and somebody done seen one and told us what it look like and somebody saw one in Mr. Pat's room and us-es figured that nobody ain't never made anything that showed a building what colored folks used for churches and us-es figured you must-a-done it, and us-es don't know if it was made jus' for white folks or if colored folks could buy one or not, but us-es had in mind to gets our moneys together and get one for us-es pastor."

I gathered the various ones had no more idea as to the cost of the individual piece than the man in the moon, but all seemed determined to acquire one, if they weren't reserved just for the white folks, if they cost \$3.00 or \$30.00 each.

Well, I reckon the Reverend Pompey A. Gillie will get a plate alright, but if once he has acquired one, without waiting for the thing to become fashionable in colored circles, the manufacturer will have to be called upon to roll out a couple of extra ones.

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As for New Year's Eve, I reckon that for most people it probably followed the usual pattern. The radio this morning spoke of record breaking crowds in Times Square, which seems to be a familiar pattern for New Year's Eve in that quarter. I heard no mention of what kind of business the Night Clubs did, up I suppose they were jammed to the usual holiday capacity. As for myself, I, too, followed the usual pattern, and like the Times Squarers and the Night Clubbers, I followed the course I like best under existing circumstances. It was pleasant on the gallery by St. Giggins Fountain with the music of Peter Illyovitch and the tinkling of Senor Caballero's musical notes, pleasantly subdued, melting smoothly ~~fix~~ with the soft glow of the tapers through the open doors of the chapel and somehow fusing into the more remote twinkling of the constellations in the Northern sky. There was some kind of a swing-out at the honkey-tonk which now and then could be heard faintly drifting across the cotton fields. First one friend and then another, heading toward the gay lights, deflected his course as he passed along beyond the bamboo, and dropped by for a little chat. One untutored Little River, just back after a year in Korea, came to give me a concept of the Far East that was both original and charmingly simple. A Red River migrant to Detroit, back for the holidays, sauntered by to contrast the ghetto concentrations of the big auto city as opposed to the open spaces of the fading South. Three or four local youths who had never been anywhere and looked with no enthusiasm to being dragged out into a military career, hoping against hope that because they really didn't know their alphabet, they might be jumped over into a 4-F classification. For no know reason, except possibly from sheer kindness or something quite unfathomable, the Wenks had brought me several pounds of excellent sliced ham which, with a couple of loaves of bread and a slab of cheese left from the Southwestern college gift of some time back, provided nourishment for my guests who had taken time out to drop in for a moment before going on to the swing-out. A glass of wine for good cheer and Die Frau and I were alone again, except for the Blessed Martin who somehow seemed so much alive when a gentle breeze from the South be-stired the quiet flame of each snowy taper. The sorrows of 1951 paled in face of the remembered joys and the promise of the unknown 1952 just coming into being was sufficient to make my New Year's Eve a happy one, for happiness is a quality which is indeed happiness only when the sensation is shared with another, and there wasn't the slightest doubt in my heart that the proximity of kindred souls, regardless of geographic stretches between contrives to make tomorrow worth looking forward to with endless anticipation.

I hope you had a nice New Year's Eve, too.....

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Wednesday, January 2nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

The warm weather continues and the weather man keeps up his prediction the cold wave is likely to roll in at any time. It seems to be still stuck somewhere between Fort Worth and Dallas and so far as I am concerned, may continue on that line as long as it pleases, although I must say these successive days of 80 degree thermometer readings tend to encourage plant development beyond the point of good sense. At Arenbourg the Chinese honeysuckle is in full bloom and at Melrose the buds of the Chinese magnolias are swelling amazingly. January 31st should be the date for them to burst into flower under normal conditions which certainly do not exist. I only hope the magnolias "don't get themselves out on a limb" as it were and divest themselves of so much long underwear that they will be blasted when the cold actually does blow in. It will not harm the Chinese honeysuckles, except to set back its flowering by a month or so, but in the case of the magnolias, once their buds are blasted, they may be written off as "cooked" for this season. I am watching those magnolias that bloomed last September or whenever, for I am anxious to see what they will offer by way of floral tributes to Spring.

And today was a festive day at Arenbourg, regardless of whatever kind of weather is impending. I had an opportunity to get some rather nice camellias, --a pure white one, a red one and a pink one at a reasonable price and as the weather was warm and the bushes in flower, I made the most of these favorable circumstances to establish them in advantage positions on the terrace and to bed them down nicely with cotton hulls so their feet will be nice and warm, regardless of what comes off the ice cakes. Camellias seem to be unique in going through the rigors of transplanting best when in flower, and off hand I can think of no other evergreen, --or deciduous plant either, that almost demands planting when in flower. But I am still so old fashioned as to assume the ordeal must put something of a strain on the plant and so, in order to relieve any expenditure of strength from being expended on its more showy attributes, I incline to remove all the buds and so let all the energy remain for the less spectacular but more vital attributes of each item.

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I devoted most of the afternoon to Melrose where I had one helper, --setting out borders of Giant's Beard, moving banana plants and Heaven knows what all. Tomorrow I am promised a half dozen expert axemen to undertake a bit of "manicuring" of the river bank, -- a job which is long over due, and I am looking forward to that job with considerable enthusiasm, and the mores so because I shall see to it that our operations extend as far as some black locuts and willows on Arenbourg which need dropping into Cane River before the season gets very far under way, and this first week in January ought to be about as good a time as one could want.

I escaped all pilgrims today, save a couple late this afternoon, --Bill Adams of the History Department at the local college and a Mormon from Salt Lake City whose name I have forgotten. I like Bill Adams and the Mormon was as civilized as Dr. Cannon and it was good to hear the latest wrinkles from up Utah way.

I did a little reading last night from the Perkins book, -- "The Emperor's Physician" which gives some interesting glimpses of Jerusalem during the Pass-over and the Crucifixion -- or I assume, at least, that the tale will probably hinge on that latter event in its final chapter. It seems to be a well written novel which one is glad to explore if nothing more to one's inclination is at hand.

I asked the lady across the fence to make out a sticker for me today, as I have difficulty in getting all on one line the 442 and one half South Carancahua Street, -- what an address, -- which I wanted to put on a package for Nina. The lady told me she had given away 2 plates from her two dozen, -- one to her sister in law, Betty Regard Courager, and the other to a friend in California who has never visited Melrose. Out of the kindness of her heart and in thoughtfulness for my welfare, she offered to lend me any if I ran short, and expressed the opinion one ought not to be too generous with them. I smiled to myself and lying, said that I agreed. In undertaking this venture, my thought was to secure enough purchasers within the family circle to cover costs with a margin that would permit certain old friends of the "Madam" to receive the item gratis, and this hope was realized and that is that. In making up the designs and combining them and in contriving the legend, nobody had time to lend me a hand, even as to the compressing of the legend into as few words as possible, which may or may not account for the 1949 date. But even so, since the thing could be conceived in the dark, I reckon I needed no be-lated advise on disposing of the merchandise, even though the motive is the kindest, don't you think so.....

Re:
Melrose plate

Mrs. O. G. Williams
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Thursday, January 3rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so along about 4:30 this morning, the cold weather finally rolled in, blanketing the landscape with a fine mist which hung in the air all day. It will grow colder tonight, down into the 20's perhaps, but the newly deployed camellias have their feet snugly tucked in, and today's mist was just the kind of atmosphere they like best, so, let us hold the thought, they are off to an auspicious start.

I had planned to devote much time to the river bank but never so much as gave a glance in that direction, what with the clammy state of things. But there was plenty to do in other lines of endeavor, and among other things, it seems to me I spent more time looking for stuff for packing a few plates than anything else. I succeeded in getting a few into the post office before closing time, --one each for Miss Nellie, Dora, Essae Mae, Deborah Abranson, Sarah Jones, Daisie in the Dell, the Denver Carrolls, Mary Dagget Lake, Anne Parrish, the Memphis Morrisons and two or three others I don't seem to recall.

I had of course intended sending one to the Briarwood gals, but from Robina's letter of yesterday, I gather she beat me to it. I am wondering if some people will get duplicates regardless, for since Sister told me she wasn't going to give any away, I am quite certain she is sowing them wholesale, and probably Nina will get one from her as well as from me, for example, although for the most part, since Sister's enthusiasm for individuals and mine don't seem to be identical very often, there probably isn't much danger.

The clerk tells me the mails have been exceedingly light during the past several days and so seems to have been my own experience, --a circumstance affording me an opportunity, -- at long last, --to go over some of the Christmas cards, which, from time to time, as I explore them further, I shall send along regardless, whether they are of any interest or not, and feel quite free to toss any or all into the trash basket, for one can't preserve all such things, even though one cannot help saving a few, as for example, little Panche as gay and pert this year decorating my desk as last year.

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The balance of this page has to do with "much a-do about nothing" and is probably so involved it is scarcely worth wading through if you are pressed for time. If you do not get around to read it, you will have missed nothing: -

When possible at Christmas time, I like trying to "kill two birds with one stone" by giving the Rands some item, as for the whole family and usually this "bird" takes the form of a turkey which I like to buy from one of my "little River friends, such as Dee-Dee who appreciates the opportunity to dispose of one of his birds at this time of the year. My notion has been that the Rands prefer country turkeys to the frozen variety and so find such a gift acceptable, while Dee-Dee is enchanted to be a party to the business. Three times I inquired this year about when the turkey would be acceptable but it was only two days before Christmas I got my answer, and it was pretty late for Dee-Dee to track down a likely specimen. I sent him word to deliver it to Puny, whose house, as you know, is next to the Rand camp, which, I thought would make things convenient all around. Well, Dee-Dee delivered the bird to Puny the day before Christmas, Puny bought chops to keep the bird fat until the Rands wanted it. I, myself, never saw it.

This morning Puny came to see me, saying he didn't know what to say, following an episode at the camp late yesterday evening. Blythe told Puny she would take the turkey home with her and asked him to kill, pick and clean it for her, which he did, but when he delivered it, she manifested vast disappointment with its appearance and told him to take it away, as she couldn't use such a scrawny looking thing. And so Puny and his family dined on turkey last night, but Puny was worried, taken aback at Blythe's disdain of the thing and fearful lest I should find out he had consumed the bird rather than the Rands. I asked him if it was scrawny and he said it wasn't too fat, which may or may not indicate a lot, but whether the bird was a light weight to begin with, which would have been wrong on Dee-Dee's part for delivering it, or whether Puny, waiting so long with the bird on his hands, didn't give it enough food, or if Blythe was feeling extra fussy or just using good acquisitive sense of rejection, I don't know. I was wrong in not giving the bird the once over to begin with. But what seems most important, Puny and his family ended up the holiday season with a turkey dinner, and for that I am delighted. I shall not so much as breathe the word Audubon when next I see the Rands, and next year, so far as I am concerned, there will be no turkey problem, don't you think so.....

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Sister's
Robina 1/3

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Friday, Jan. 4th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The mists and the rains continued all night and today, with a heavy cloud coverage tonight. But the cold wave failed to make much headway and last night's low was about 50. Which is just another way of saying the weather is favorable for the Arenbourg "children".

The paucity of adequate packing material makes the shipment of plates a problem but even so I got one off to the Harnesses and, by a somewhat dubious social method, got rid of five all in one carton, sending some "atchez people theirs in a single batch to Rowan, explaining the business to her and asking her to retain one for herself and roll one each to Mary Rhodes, Mary Lambdin, Miss Ayra and Mrs. Moore. I told Rowan I wouldn't write any of the others regarding the matter so that she might feel free to take as much time as she pleased in advising them by telephone that she was holding a "memorial plate for them.

In a way, it seems a bit odd that I should have sent one to Mary Rhodes who never knew the Madam, except by fame and through Lyle whom she knew well, and no better does she know Melrose, since she has never been here. But basic considerations I pelling me to include one for Mary were these: - she, with one or two possible exceptions, better appreciated what the Madam and Melrose stood for than anyone else in Mississippi. That should in itself be enough to merit a plate. But on quite another level, such a gesture might mean more to Mary than to any of the others, for none of them, I suppose, has had the physical and financial worries that have been her lot these past few years and none of them are so poor in maintaining friendships as she. Her own cares have been so great that her viewpoint as to the problems of others has frequently been false or considerably out of focus, as was so apparant in some of her letters to me along about 1947 or 1948 when she seemed to proceed on the assumption that only indifference to others on my part caused me to neglect my "atchez friends during those last years of the Madam's life. It would be pretentious on my part to assume that one harmless plate is likely to cast any beam of sunshine on her fretful horizon, but if it does no more than indicate to her that although neglected, she is still remembered, perhaps it will offer her a momentary gleam of sunshine. I hope.

It is pleasant to be able to report, too, that with the arrival

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in today's post of Sister's check, plus the checks from Miss Kate, Blythe and three other members of the Henry clan, all costs of the manufacturing have been discharged in something less than the usual 30 day credit period obtaining in such a transaction. In a way, it seems rather remarkable that a perfect, originally inaugurated with no notion of producing anything bordering on popularity should have come to such a satisfactory conclusion so speedily.

I am frankly a little puzzled at Sister's apparent determination to sell these items which I had conceived as something in the nature of a Memorial and not as an article of trade, and I was vaguely aghast to learn from her letter (enclosed) that Clif Byrd contemplated putting one of his on display at Hemingway-Johnson's, --one of Shreveport's mightier emporiums, functioning widely throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and impressively in Texas. But whatever Sister and he are contriving, although beyond my comprehension, interests me not at all, for my original efforts have been accomplished and the manufacturing costs settled which leaves me feeling completely indifferent to whatever twist Sister wants to initiate on her own hook.

Robina's allusion to calling nobody's attention to any error in the plate is in my response to my letter to her, advising her of the presence of the 1949 date instead of the correct 1948. With equal frankness, I pointed out the error to Celeste, too, and suggested that nothing be said about it unless, as was unlikely, some member of the family should notice the matter, whereupon it would be time enough to point out that she and I were both aware of the extra 44 days given the "adam's residence at Melrose. Celeste may be counted upon to say nothing, although, so far as I am concerned, it makes no difference if anyone notices it or not. Oddly, however, Miss Sally set up a racket about the 1898 date when Miss Gammie took up her residence at Melrose but I settled that quite easily by opening a book wherein Miss Gammie in her own hand had written "I came to live at Melrose, Nov. 1898", --a fact easily substantiated by the place of birth of S. G. and J. A. at Henryville and the balance of the brood at Melrose. Isn't it hilarious that Miss Sally should have worried over the 1898 date which actually correct and completely ignored the adjoining date of 1949 which was incorrect.

Locally the political pot is beginning to boil, what with State elections scheduled for January 15th. One smart newspaper in town brought forth a statement, purported to be from, but apparently quite unknown prior to publication, on the part of Dr. Johnson, the negro doctor of Natchitoches, wherein Dr. Johnson, as head of the Association for the Advancement of Colored People, indicated what candidates the colored people would endorse at the polls. This piece of chicanery on the part of the publisher was "cooked up" simply to defeat the candidates named, since all the hill-billy votes would automatically be cast for anyone except those appearing on the list.

So things turn, and my reading machine revolve more frequently these nights, since the politicians have just about taken over local radio stations for their politician clap-trap. And within 9 months, the same sort of things, I suppose, will begin on a nati

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Mary Lee Davis
1/1

Sunday, January 6th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It's cool, but all day it was blue and gold and tonight solidly silver.

I don't seem to think of anything particularly interesting that transpired over the week-end, although there were pilgrims, which isn't news, and a bit of reading which isn't either.

I finished the Perkins book, "The Emperor's Physician" which was pleasant but not important, being another segment of life revolving around the last year of Christ's activities, with emphasis on an attempted rationalization of His healing propensities.

There was a two day convention of Knights of Columbus at Natchitoches this week end, and today, by appointment, I received perhaps 30 or 40 ladies at Melrose while their husbands "conventioned" in town. It was a civilized group and, oddly enough, contained a few Parish people, such as Mrs. Peyton Cunningham, who brought me a lovely Currier and Ives calendar, and Mme. Alphonse Fudhomme whose home, --formerly "Uncle Phanor's", which you will recall is just at the bridge on the Joyeuse Cote, down this way from Beaufort. I suggested the ladies who had been through the mill before might enjoy sitting with Celeste in the library of the big house while the others joined me in making a round, but none of them wanted to "stay put", and so I had the entire batch, with Celeste retiring to her house until the tour was completed. Celeste urged some of them to remain with her, as I had suggested before they had arrived, but for some reason all of those who had been here before, sometimes the third or four go-round, but I had no luck at all, trying thus to rid myself of excess baggage. I should think some of them would be tired of doing the rounds, but I reckon they feared they might miss something.

Yesterday I gave one of the shortest tours on record. Just at dinner time, a priest arrived with his mother, -- the latter hobbling on two canes. The poor woman was suffering from tooth ache as well as locomotion troubles, and on discovering the library was not heated at the time, decided to remain in the dining room. As it was time for dinner to be served, I thought I would hurry the priest, -- a dull fellow, through the rest

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of the business, and so, stepping to the back door of the big house with him, I waved my arm in the direction of the African house and Yucca, and remarked that in reality, that was all there was to Melrose, just those couple of old buildings, which seemed to satisfy him completely, and he was back at the front gate with him mama before he knew what had struck him. Why mama, passing out on her legs and dying of tooth ache should have even considered making a gesture at touring, I can't imagine, but I reckon she will experience vast satisfaction in the future by declaring she has "seen" Melrose.

Pat came home for the week end. He seems to like his present service, and although I didn't have an opportunity to chat much with him, I did hear one phase of the act vity which had its hilarious aspects. It seems somebody wrote three words on a coat-hanger, I believe it was, and top brass, commanding the division in whose quarters the thing was noticed, were naturally furious when called up on the carpet to state who had scrawled the words, -- "Russia Will Win". Imagine.

I have no doubt there must be a great strain put on F. B. I. and their counterpart in the armed forces in deciding just where business leaves off and tomfoolery begins. With the majority of people mentally unsound, -- haven't I heard somewhere it is about 80 per cent, -- it must be quite a job when one is concerned with keeping millions straight. Sooner or later there will probably have to be some kind of a curb put on special agents or the Democracies will find themselves as inconvenienced as the Autocracies in the clutter of secret police. It is interesting that Madam Regard's grandson, who is in the F. B. I., is still stationed in New England, apparently still delving on the solution of that famous Boston bank robbery of two or three years back. I suppose the newspapers have dropped that story years ago, but it seems the Department of Justice keeps hammering away on it under cover.

I was impressed by the casual reference to Mrs. Lynch in the enclosure, for I had no idea that her fame was spread as far afield as Kansas City. The Madam and I used to stop by her place on occasion when we were in South Louisiana, and Celeste has purchased several things from her, I believe. Mr. Lynch was ailing years ago and so his wife decided she would gather together a few pieces of furniture together in her house and sell things to anyone in the neighborhood who might need an odd chair or table or whatever. Somehow, and by no advertising on her part, her place, -- just an ordinary house, became known to people all over the Gulf area. The house is piled high with stuff, often nice pieces, and she must be making a fortune. But I must fold, grab a bite, indulge in a bit of concert and so fold for tomorrow will be a busy day at gardening.....

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Klaser exhibit
in Beaumont
1/6-27
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Monday, January 7th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A white frost this morning, another brilliantly cool day, and tonight another frost that in the light of the waxing moon, makes the white garden look whiter than white.

The day was rather full, -- --4 hours at Arenbourg, 5 hours at Melrose, with the river bank being put into some kind of order, what with the felling of young-ish trees and overgrown willows that somehow had climbed to unwarranted heights during the past season or two. I had a couple of expert axe men with me at Arenbourg and six at Melrose, and the chopping and splashing of trees into the water was wonderful.

As is my custom, I devoted the earliest hours of the day to Arenbourg and so when late afternoon came, I found myself on the river bank, looking like something slap out of a rag bag, -- torn trousers and generally untidiness when Blythe arrived with Maude Pattison and Harold Wheadon, -- a friend of theirs, -- a pleasant youth in perhaps his mid 20's, who had asked to come this way some time back.

I sent Maud to give Mr. Wheadon a tour while Blythe and I retired to Yucca. She had something to tell me. It was about the scrawny turkey which she said she thought I would like to know about in order to check on who "short-changed" us. Naturally I never breathed a word that I had heard anything about it and thanked her for telling me. I might have told her a heap of things about the way the matter was handled, but I could see no point in that, -- and besides, I am glad Funy and Zelma had an unexpected turkey dinner last Tuesday night.

By good fortune, just as the turkey business was "sewed up", little Miss Ette Levy and Aunt Lottie appeared on the gallery. It seems to me they were last here sometime in the Spring. I turned them loose on Blythe while I rounded up Maud and her pilgrim and we all had a pleasant little chat. Blythe and Maud had to go over to the camp and left Mr. Wheadon here, but we didn't have much opportunity to chat since the Levy ladies had to be waited to their horseless carriage, which is a slow process in that set up. I

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made the most the Ette's presence to toss a plate in her direction and to get her to deliver a couple in town for me,-- one to Dr. and Mrs. McCook and one to Mrs. Weiss, --old friends of the Madam I hope by this means I succeeded in staving off visits from both parties, for the McCooks have a unique way of always passing this way at the wrong time and never knowing when to depart, while Mrs. Weiss never gets down at all. Besides, the Levys and the McCooks live in houses whose gardens adjoin, so the delivery of that particular item shouldn't be too arduous.

The parcel post department continues to function and today brought me a pleasant bottle of wine from the Suttons of Natchitoches with some reference to something or other I did for them last summer, but for the life of me, I can't remember any deed I performed in their behalf, so assume they may have confused my good offices with those of someone else. But I shall hastily acknowledge the gift so the bottle will remain right here, for they are scheduled to pass this way one Sunday in February and the bottle will afford any excellent medium for entertainment in a modest way.

I propose rigging up tomorrow's schedule along lines of today, so far as the morning is concerned, for some friends of somebody or other, and a couple of West Pointers, telephoned during the Rand-Levy visitation, asking for an appointment on the morrow, and I suggested 4 p.m., which is really too late for convenience, so far as my own arrangements go, but about right so far as giving me an opportunity to keep the axes swinging for the better part of the day. I can still hear a couple of stupid New Orleans bags of last Sunday saying: - "You have no idea how we envy you..... such a peaceful place and nothing to do all day."

I agreed with me that it is really wonderful, - especially the inactivity.

For lack of better fare, I got around to read a page or so a novel of contemporary Manhattan-Connecticut life in a thing called "Babbling's Way, or some such title, and I don't recall the author. It seems to be a pretty good razz of the successful advertising mogul with Madison Avenue offices and a home in the country, with a couple of hours of commuting at the beginning and close of day. The thing is well read and laugh provoking, I expect, but I soon discovered myself nodding and so folded up both the reading machine and myself, and tonight I think I shall just fold myself. Had no opportunity to run through the enclosed catalogue and suppose it contains nothing of interest. And let us hope to write a better memo on the morrow.....

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Tuesday, January 8th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Cloudy and warm in the upper 70's with a sprinkling of Chinese magnolia blossoms unfolding at vantage points here and there about the garden. Cooler weather is promised for next week end, but at least the more daring flowers have had their fling for this season.

On the gardening front, yesterday was but a duplicate of yesterday, with scads of willows toppling onto the placid surface of Cane River and vagrant china berry trees and thorn bushes giving way for wider prospects or prettier trees and bushes.

Dr. Sarah Clapp from Natchitoches telephoned yesterday saying Mr. and Mrs. Williams of South Dakota were in town, and as they had made a quick go-round a year or so ago along about this time of year, --as I recall, the Kleissers were here painting at the time, --and the Williams wanted to come and see me again today. And so I said yes, and their little visit made a pleasant, and at one spot, an amusing interlude in my more strident activities.

The Williamses are heading to Florida for their annual outing. The brought a book, a chapter of which they wanted to read to me. It was an essay written by their eldest son when in college. He was born blind and gave an interesting account of what he "saw" in his world. It seems he studied Law, and after graduation began the practice of the same, married, begot three offspring and is quite successful in his native South Dakota.

After the reading and a brief chat, I set forth a little tray holding three wine glasses, a bottle of port and cigarettes. As I placed the tray on the bidet in front of the sofa where Mrs. Williams and I had been sitting, she instantly arose, as did Mr. Williams who had been occupying a chair facing us. Almost, as though it had been a rehearsed act, both the lady and gentleman, as by signal,

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turned forward their left lapel, flashing a little bow of white ribbon on me, revealing, as they explained that they were both ardent prohibitionist and had taken the pledge never to permit wine to contaminate their lips.

Their act would have been more successful if I had more readily noted their badge of dryness and remembered what it stood for. On having it pointed out to me and its import explained, I dimly recalled having once known that the white bow signified total abstinence, but I had somehow filed away the knowledge with the end of the prohibition era as something permanently laid on the shelf along side a half dozen other symbols of that happily forgotten era, and so the whole thing lacked éclat.

It was immediately evident to my guests, however, that I had no intention of making an issue about anyone drinking, and they accordingly relaxed again, resumed their seats and our conversation continued, and happiness beamed on their faces when I explained I was very much interested in their enthusiasm for again making America the great arid plain it was once supposed to have been, and that I would be glad to hear how the dry forces operated in their native South Dakota. I'm not sure, on departing, they felt entirely convinced they had persuaded me to chuck the port and glasses out of the window, but Hope stirred in their souls that I was perhaps on the way to "seeing the light", and thus their visit was an unusual success, so far as their satisfaction was concerned.

Fiddling around with a half dozen domestic chores tonight, the fact that it was Tuesday slipped my mind and I forgot to turn on the radion from Lowell Thomas' slap through Fibber and Molley. I heard Edward R. Morrow last night, however, and was surprised by his remark that while General Eisenhower, (it's so odd I can never remember how the name is spelled,)-- while the General appears to view foreign policies eye to eye with President Truman, he is even more conservative than Senator Taft (of all people) on domestic and especially financial matters. That is certainly a disappointment, assuring it is true, and let us hope it isn't, for his election certainly seems inevitable, even though much water will have passed over the dam between January and November.

And now I must fold, looking forward to the morrow as a probable fac-simile of today, although it would be too much to anticipate another gentle but determined lady arising from my sofa to declare: "I have taken the pledge and with God's help am not a single drop of alcohol will ever stain my lips..."

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Wednesday, January 9th, 1952.

Memorandum:

While I think of it, there may be a delay of two or three days in delivery of mail from this bend of the river, beginning with my Memo of the 13th, and possibly continuing through the 14th and 15th. And there may be no delay at all. The fact is that the clerk is taking off two or three days beginning Monday, the 14th, which means that the merchant planter will probably be presiding over the Post Office in the legitimate role he never exercises, --Post Master, although it is equally possible Ben or anybody else may be delegated. Eugene, the clerk is never absent, so that the Post Office doesn't go into a tangle so far as out-going mail is concerned, and usually J. B. somehow gets the out-going stuff into the sack alright, but there will be a particular hub-bub on the 14th and 15th, when Louisiana goes to the polls and as there is a voting place at Melrose, with all the attendant whoop-la, the out-going mail may be in a flurry, and if that circumstance eventuates, I shall simply without my mail and let it slide along on Wednesday when a degree of normalcy returns.

I mention all this in order to re-assure you that an absence of a familiar envelope at 908 may not be interpreted as anything out of gear at this end of the grapevine, save the post office itself, and that no no distracted postal official at your end of the vine is guilty of stuffing the right envelopes in the wrong box.

Today was like yesterday in weather, work but not in whiskey adversaries, for I was lucky in escaping pilgrims today and hope I may not have to make up for lost time on the morrow, as I have a heap of things I want to attend to.

While tidying up the bank in front of Melrose, I took the opportunity this afternoon's peace afforded to pick up a couple of plants too long absent from Yucca --for I transplanted both yucca and Spanish dagger from the river bank to the East end of Yucca, -- between Yucca and the African House. What with their multitudinous spikes, neither plants, --and I am always confusing the one for the other, can be moved without the gardener getting a few thrusts from their spines. But with Andy's aid, I

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moved examples of each variety, - one about 3 feet in height, the other about 5, and as both flowered wonderfully last summer, they will, if they like their new situation, repeat the performance this year. The root of this plant is as deceptive as any I know, for in spite of one such as moved today, --5 feet, -- the base is simply a continuation of the stem, --3 inches or so in diameter, with a root system that is no more expansive than the average human hand. It somehow always seems so inadequate for the support of so many daggers and such a marvelous cluster of flowers.

After today's clouds and warm Gulf breeze, tonight's sky is breaking through with patches of star spangled blue and racing clouds are being driven helter-skelter across the pathway of the full moon, and the thermometer is gently dropping.

I was surprised to stumble into a re-broadcast of Mr. Truman's State of the Nation speech at 6 o'clock tonight over a Louisiana station. Usually I run up on such re-broadcasts late at night over some remote station such as Des Moines, and it seems the more odd not only that it should have been forth-coming over a local station at an hour when the air-waves are usually clogged with commercials, but also during this present week when even the usual sales commercials are side tracked for the political band wagon which goes full tilt in this region at the moment. Several candidates are "taking the hide off" Jimmy Aswell who is writing speeches for Maclemore. J. H. remarked at supper that while it must be agreed, Aswell swings a smooth political pen, he probably would have been smarter to remain anonymous in so doing, since it gives all those in the other camps an opportunity to smear the faction with which he has associated himself, what with the content of the last two Aswell novels being employed as examples of what nobody wants.

My out of door activities thus far this week have inclined me to let my mail slide, but I am hoping to find the excuse of cold weather on the morrow as an excellent reason for getting in a bit of desk work.

The enclosed picture of the Charleston Churches reminded me of a service I attended in the Eugene one. During the sermon, a big old rooster flew up and perched on the open window and crowed mightily just when the preacher touched on Peter's denial of Christ. It was wonderfully effective.....

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Daisy Dell 1/7
Dora 1/7 5248
The Sage
Edwards China Co
Carl Hansen 1/13
Maryell Davis 1/7
Kebueh 1/7

Thursday, January 10th, 1952.

Memorandum:

In reality, this isn't the envelope tat counts, but rather either one of the two accompanying ones. For I think you will find mild entertainment in the one, - Dora's gay way of saying things, the sweet emotionalism of Daisey in the Dell and so on. But you will agree with me that the letter from la Storm is really exceptional, for she writes so well and has so many interesting things to say that one might well, I imagine, re-read such a letter as the one enclosed and really find the second go-round as delightful as the first.

I know not if she is qoting or not, --I didn't have time to inquire, --but regardless of that, her line is excellent wherein she declares "I would rather see a sermon than hear one".

interruption

Three hours have elapsed, what with Ben having passed this way with a request that I write him some letters, looking forward to canvassing various colleges to see how much time would be required for him to get a doctor's degree. I walked back to the big house with him just to get a breath of fresh air and to see how pretty the frost covered roof of the African House looks under the full moon. It really is splendid.

I was glad to get in a couple of licks at Arenbourg this morning, but Thursday morning's are inevitably broken into by the visit of the good doctor and his wife. This afternoon I tried to concentrate on tidying up the river bank in front of Melrose but what with the day being fine and road-runners in uncountable numbers, I found it difficult to get very far with any chore without having a car stop to inquire this or that and usually with a request to explore behind the bushes. I was glad to see Dr. and Mrs. Bath in one such car, for they are

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kindly people from Natchitoches and as Dr. Bath, now retired, was for a number of years Miss Leudivine's favorite physician, he makes an excellent conversationalist in opening up half forgotten vistas on the Melrose of a quarter of a century or more ago. There is a further tie with the Baths through the Knipmeyers, for Mrs. Bath's daughter married Dr. and Mrs. Knipmeyer's son, and so with a Knipmeyer session in the morning and a Bath in the afternoon, it somehow seemed like a great big progressive family reunion.

Through Lowell Thomas's newsbroadcast tonight, I learned that the garden variety of hydrangea all these years has held the same or equal or parallel curative power for malaria that for so many centuries what thought to be the exclusive property of quinine, although from the Thomas report, I gather that China had long used the hydrangea as a source of anti-malarial medicine. It reminded me of the things Dr. Miller used to speak about in regard to her medical experiences in the Celestial Empire, and what wonder it was that the Western world had never tapped the assortment of drug sources, so abundantly known in Chinese medical circles and so completely unheard of in the Western world.

The prolonged heat of last summer just about finished off the -renbourg hydrangeas but I am putting out some more next month and so our malarial stock ought to be abundant by the time Spring breaks through. I invariably think of a lovely little New England cemetery whenever I glance at hydrangeas, for I saw some lovely ones there one moon flooded midnight years ago, --the loveliest I had ever seen, and at the same time I always recall a comparison made by Sam Brown a few years back when he was trying to explain some bush he had in mind, saying that it was standing along side that there bush what looks like a lady's dress. I puzzled over that one for several minutes before I felt a glimmer of recognition, and to this day I still wonder what impelled him to draw such a comparison, but assume he may have sometime or other been impressed by the sight of some gown that carried large flowers in the printed design. So far as the shape of the bush is concerned, when not decked out with huge blossoms, I can't find anything reminding me of a lady's dress, so I conclude it must have been the print of the cloth that reminded him of the hydrangea on full flower.

But according to my little desk clock, Friday is already upon us and I had better fold.....

Deborah L. Brown
Harold Wheeler 1/9
5250 1/2

Friday, January 11th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The hodge-podge of gardening and "pilgrimage" continues, with the weather warmer and the sky draped with heavy clouds that probably will spill a bit of water over the landscape before the week end is completed.

Mrs. Combs passed this way shortly after noon, bringing a number of odds and ends in the packing necessities on my request, --old newspapers, rubber bands, wrapping paper and so on. I sometime think I have a nerve asking her to do such things when she has so much on her mind, --she is building a new home, her youngest son has pneumonia and she is in business, but then I am forever hoping that the momentary respite she experiences in getting out from under all the whiz of town provides a mild compensation by its momentary relaxation, and I work that theory hard, since it makes me a little less shame-faced for having added to her burdens.

Just as she passed this way today, Mrs. Gordon Randolph arrived, too, and it was nice the two ladies could have a little chat together while I did a little tour for the Randolph guests, --the Madisons from Indianapolis, the Thomases from Alexandria and so on. Mrs. Thomas has been here once before, having come with the Garden Club crowd along about 1949. I believe she went to Ward-Belmont school with Celeste when both were getting "finished". Be that as it may, their advent provided me with the same change of endeavor, up from gardening on the river bank, as the Comb's visitation provided in another direction, and I guess I am glad everybody came, although I discovered at the end of the day, I should have been just as happy if I had done a little more, although I am probably less physically tired, what with the interlude.

I learn from the grapevine that the S. C. Henrys have purchased a couple adjoining lots some 5 or 6 miles South East of Baton Rouge, somewhere near the Sky Line highway running to New Orleans. I take it they must be rather fine lots, since the price is said to have been six or seven thousand dollars, and such a price so far in the country would suggest they must be something special. It is said vast plans are being

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contrived for a house on each of the adjoining lots, - one for the S. G. seniors, and one for the S. G. juniors.

From all this, I gather there is hopes S. G. junior may expect to quit the hospital eventually and take up his residence in Baton Rouge. With S. G. senior as Vice President of the Ethel Corporation, I suppose S. G. junior may be supposed to know the "right people", and what with priority given some veterans and assuming he may contrive his physical being to suit mental activity along business instead of military lines, a future in some commercial line may be anticipated. And so, assuming all this is what is being contemplated, the accident that wrecked the military career, put father ~~inxxx~~ and son into close business association, - assuming an Ethel job for junior is contemplated, while the mother will undoubtedly be entranced to have her son living right next door to her, which never, of course, would have happened had the military career been carried out.

I am certainly ashamed I have let my correspondence slide so badly since December 1st when the holiday whiz started about the time the crowds began flocking to "atchitoches". I have written la Storm in so long, --early December, I reckon she will be thinking me just another Dorman in the business of writing letters. And in referring to "adam Storm, I think I didn't mention in yesterday's memo the interesting account of the Diary from Dixie, as edited by Ben Ames Williams. The blurb quoted in the Storm letter makes the thing sound ever so interesting and I think I shall cash off a little note to the Library of Congress, recommending the thing be put on the Talking Book list.

I had also better write Harold Wheadon, saying thanks for his letter and recommending Melrose in the Spring as a wonderful time to spend the day here. He is a nice person but I have so many things I want to do on the end of a spade at the moment that I can't see giving up a day to entertaining unless, perchance, I can toss him a hoe and let conversation flow along agricultural lines as both host and guest delve in the soil.

As indicated in yesterday's memo, there may be a skip between this note and the next reaching your true hand, but Eugene is returning on Wednesday, I believe, and it is possible I may get one memo at least posted between now and then. Do so hope you are taking care of you....

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Sunday, January 13th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter of Tuesday, the 8th, in Saturday's post. I beg you not to feel "shame-faced" about an interim in writing, if one develops, for you know I understand perfectly and shall always be the happier, should a moment of relaxation present itself, if you will make the most of it by just relaxing.

I am glad you mentioned the matter of your note to Celste, for it was I, not she, who failed to refer to it. Like everybody else, her holiday season was busy, but she didn't fail to speak of your lovely note to her. As I recall, it was one morning in the garden when she was dashing to the big house and I was tangled up in Giant's Beard. She intended reading it to me on her way back to the side gate, but pilgrims intervened and what with the hurly-burly that ensued on my own hook, I reckon I put off mentioning its advent until the next day when she would have an opportunity to run through it with me, --and of course that opportunity got lost in the swirl of people and things, --and obviously I forgot to mention it. The important thing is that it did come safely to hand, and as I have already reported, I believe, she was perfectly enchanted with your lovely gift which I thought as elegant as anything of its type coming to my attention.

And may I thank you for all the charming things you had to say about the plate. It's so good to know you liked it, for, frankly, I need scarcely remark that your approval is all that interests me in the whole business. Twenty four dozen have been disposed of and several people have telephoned to ask if additional ones may be secured. I placed the order with the Baltimore concern with the understanding that the merchandise was to be reserved exclusively for my order, and if there should be further demands, I reckon I shall have to re-order.

I'm so interested in your inquiry regarding the possibility of making use of the big house, the African House and Yucca for something along parallel lines. It could be carried out rather neatly, I think and I shall continue mulling over the idea. Frankly, I have been casting about for a suitable medium through which the African House can be presented in a form that would be different but perhaps as popular in its appeal as the Melrose plate seems to have been. I continue to think of the African House in connection with glass as the medium, --transparent glass, but more of that after I have done a bit more casting about on the subject.

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It goes without saying that I am consumed with thoughts about the totally unsatisfactory circumstances obtaining during recent weeks on both the domestic and business fronts. I have no doubt the inundation of South Americans may eventually be expected to recede providing a bit of a breather on the home scene. But, it seems to me, if you will pardon my French, the office thing seems to be a Hellish sort of a business. and what makes it particularly maddening is the fact that undoubtedly there are several desirable jobs in Manhattan which are crying for just such a person as the one who would add so much lustre to them and executives are wringing their hands, praying for a kind Providence that would bring such a person and person into conjunction.

As I cast about in my mind, trying to think of some way to insert a wedge in this blank wall, first one impossible idea and then another comes to mind, and I set forth none of them as worth considering. At the moment, for example, I find myself wondering if it would be wise to insert a paragraph in a letter to James M. Cain sometime, running something like this:

"I am acquainted with an individual of remarkable intelligence (who is pretty, too), living in Manhattan, an expert stenographer and heaven knows what all in the line of business capabilities. She is currently connected with some kind of a gigantic corporation, all tangled up in some kind of a statistical occupation which any robot could handle and her gifts are simply going down the drain already clogged with endless adding machine tape. It occurs to me some of your publishing friends in Manhattan, such as the Knopfs, might sometime welcome the opportunity of annexing the services of such a person, and should they ever drop word of such a need, I should count it a blessing to be able to establish contact for the mutual advantage of both parties."

Ponder on some such matter, and if you tell me we had better watch out or he will be writing the same to Standard Brands, I shall have to agree you are perfectly right, what with the fine mess he manipulated so magically with the L. S. U. Press.

In the mean time, let's "hold the thought" that some pleasant perspective isn't too far in the offing, --things can take such unexpected-twists.

It has been such a pleasant week end, what with having your lovely letter, the weather being fair and warm, and not to many pilgrims. I hope you got a moment to yourself, too.....

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Monday, January 14th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Cloudy, warm and humid, and just the right kind of a rig-up, atmospherically, to dig in the ground, and I did much digging.

At Arenbourg, I set out three Beauty bushes, --a type of shrub with which you may be acquainted under some other name, for it seems to have a flock of them, none others coming to mind at the moment.

It grows about 6 or 7 feet tall, is deciduous and in April is covered with clusters of little white flowers about the size of a silver dollar. It's good for an explosion of white in a sea of greenery and I think they will pick up vividness in Unit No. 2, about the time the white wisterias are through blossoming.

On my return to Melrose about 9:30 I had a message the Alexandria telephone operator, No. 14, was calling me. I contacted the lady and she kept me hung up on the wire for 20 minutes, frequently saying "One Moment, Please" and then cutting me off so I couldn't shout at her. Finally she engaged me in conversation, asking me from whom I was expecting a call from Alexandria. I told her I wasn't expecting any. She finally gave up and said she could find no party having put in a call for me.

Half an hour later I got another message. This time Operator 15 wanted to get hold of my ear. She finally put on Mrs. Holoman, and that was that.

Mrs. Holoman wanted to come up this way this afternoon. She brought her sister with her, --an Illinois member of the family, of whom there seem to be several. The reason for the visit was based on the fact that her sister has recently lost her sight and needed some kind of encouragement. That was certainly easy, and I was only sorry I didn't happen to have a couple of extra spades to put both ladies to work.

In regard to the Gannett business, Mrs. Holoman cited the hurly-burly of the holidays as having prevented her from consummating that story. I can appreciate the truth of her statement.

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I read a little last night before folding up, but not much. The thing was "Introducing the Universe" by Hickey, which seems to be a popular account of some of the personalities in the planetary world. I believe Hickey used to write a column in the old Sun on Saturday, if memory serves, -- "Stars of the Week" or some such thing it was called, and was worth reading.

What with the visitors and gardening, I didn't get around to explore today's post, which seems to have contained nothing of moment, I gather, -- as the several things were probably thank you notes covering plates sent to Georgetown, Conn., Baton Rouge, Fort Worth, Denver and so on. It is possible the secretaries may be more readily available on the morrow, for it apparently is going to rain, which often means no school, and for all I know, there may be no school anyway, what with election -- for Louisiana schools, especially of the colored variety, seem to find more excuses for not opening their doors than any other State I ever encountered.

What with today being the Madm's birthday, I rounded up a couple of bowls of narcissus blossoms to grace her night table and my desk. The effects of the prolonged drought of last summer still linger on, for while thousands, probably hundreds of thousands of bulbs have put forth a brave foliage, the flowers themselves are a month or two behind schedule, whereas the Chinese magnolias are two weeks ahead. I must say such lack of consistency is a bit baffling.

I reckon there is much talk about elections on the local front tonight, for many a local person of color will cast his first ballot on the morrow. The only positive interest I have heard expressed concerns Parish officials, and the emphasis is on the Sheriff which probably is the office with which many if not the great majority of the prospective voters have come into contact with in times gone by. The requisite for voting is one's ability to sign his name, it appears. It happens that many have mastered this accomplishment without ever knowing the identity of the letters used in making the signature. The office of Sheriff is being sought by the present incumbent, -- Morris, and his deputy, Black, and nobody likes Black much, but since the poor things can't read the letters spelling out either name, it is difficult to guess how they are going to hit at their real choice. But the same was true with the hilly billies when they were in a preponderance, and so I reckon the results will not vary greatly.....

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Tuesday, January 15th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The warm, cloudy, humid weather continues, with a high in the 80's this afternoon and the promise of like conditions for the next several days.

The Chinese magnolias are all on the point of making their bow in their annual Spring parade. For instance, the pure white one, balancing the big old lamp at the end of the brick walk in front of the big house unwrapped one of its snowy flowers along about noon today, and a couple of hundred other buds will probably have followed suit by tomorrow morning. From your bath room, looking east toward the Bindery, there stands one of the larger pink-purple magnolias which usually is way out ahead. It is now completely in flower and somehow reminds me of the photographs of the sun tinted cloud off the exploded atom bomb, hovering filmy but statuesque in the sky. The deep purple tree in front of Dr. Miller's is also covered with blossoms. By Sunday, as expressed by Sam Brown on a like occasion years ago, "looks all lit up".

In spite of unusual activity on two or three different tacks, I got quite a lot of work done today both at this bend of the river and further up the road. The polls opened early and all day the space from the front gate to half way to the bridge was cluttered up with cars, -- local voters coming to perform their duties and hangers on just lolling about. I don't recall such a continuous activity around the store at any other election, and this is the first one, of course, in which the negroes have cast a considerable vote.

It is interesting that the negroes with whom I have talked have no interest in casting their ballots for the member of their own race, -- Parker, I believe his name is, who is running for the Governor's chair from his New Orleans residence. I doubt if Parker has much backing by money to enable him to do any campaigning on an extensive scale. There seems to be a feeling on the part of colored and non-colored voters that this year is not the time for voting along racial lines and the candidate excites no confidence from either racial group. I heard the man speak briefly on the radio. His English was arresting, since it was mighty faulty but

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somehow didn't reflect the type of inaccuracies one is accustomed to in the Natchitoches or Natchez manner. The Parker words were fairly impressive in length, - beyond the usual choice of the untutored negro, and yet his double negatives while common among local negroes, did not seem to carry the usual word arrangement. I think how the man spoke made little or no difference so far as vote-getting is concerned, but it is possible that a few people might have manifested greater interest in him, had his errors been more like those one usually hears, and therefore, because of the familiarity, aren't especially noticeable.

I assume Representative Boggs, --Senator Long's favorite candidate, or Judge Spath, Governor Long's choice, will get the high count when the ballots are tallied (tallied), which again just goes to prove that the Longs are like to win regardless.

The strange doings around the Melrose well continues to operate. Today another flock of material arrived in the form of a tank of some kind, endless pipes and curious looking engines. I believe this is the fourth tank installed up to the present, and with the water already running through three of them, and scheduled to circulate through the 4th, what finally comes out of this extensive assortment ought to be extra special, I should imagine. Up to and through the functioning of the first three tanks, the water continues to be so full of iron, everything is discolored by it and gobs of iron, about the size of one's little finger, tend to form in the water pipes when the water isn't running. The effect is really quite startling as one, for instance, turns on the bath without first draining the pipes a bit. I have heard of alcoholics imagining pink elephants and green reptiles or some such, but for cold sober people to discover a flock of pink or rust colored iron polywogs in the tub is something new.

A couple of telephones from town during the morning indicated some Government people in neighboring towns were enjoying a full day of freedom on the election excuse, and what with the weather being pleasant, they envisioned a tour, but so far as I was concerned, I frowned and lied and said I already had too many guests, --for I had none, but the absence of the road runners gave me an opportunity to operate on two or three fronts, much to my satisfaction, and there'll be enough people around by the week end.....

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Wednesday, January 16th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The weather continues in the 80's with a low in the 60's at night. I got in a morning's work, but a drizzle induced a bit of desk work during the afternoon until the rain stopped and weed pulling was easy.

To get any news outside election returns, I have to fish about for trans-Louisiana stations, which are easy enough to get, especially the Texas ones in the day time, with the entire country readily available at night. I find the Columbia stations but completely carried away with reading election returns, to the exclusion of all other news, and such old stand-byes as Ed. Morrow is silenced on Shreveport stations in order the latest figures on vote counting can be presented, and although 24 hours have elapsed since the polls closed and the issuing of figures began, there are only about 1,500 of the 2,000 precincts tabulated.

Surely other things are happening in the world beyond a flock of hill-billies counting phoney ballots, and since this is true, I take it something of a mania must have taken possession of local stations, and particularly may this observation apply to the Columbia system.

It seems to me I recall some other "all-out" business by Columbia on some other subject, but for the life of me, I don't seem to remember the subject which knocked them over into such a lop-sided condition.

I seem to have a rare assortment of titles to select for reading, and not one of them, except one, seems to have much interest. The exception is the memoirs of Admiral Leahy, -- "I Was There", being the title, if I remember correctly. --

I read a few pages from it's opening chapters last night, and found it much to my liking. It begins with his Embassy at Vichy about which I know little or nothing since I was pretty much dependent on the radio at the time for my news. I do recall that the boy friend was here about that time or perhaps during that period, and I never did feel I agreed with him

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on some of the points and personalities which we discussed at the time.

I regret I didn't know more people from the same country at the time in order to determine if the well informed, -- if, indeed, anybody was well informed at such a time when everything was so distorted and twisted for all kinds of reasons, -- but I recall one thing on which I disagreed with the boy friend warmly, -- so warmly in fact, that I stated my position briefly and then never brought up the subject again. It had to do with the British bombing of one of the automobile factories situated somewhere near Meudon. I was enchanted when I heard this news, for it seemed to me that putting factories out of commission in the occupied country was a good step in the right direction. The boy friend seemed shocked at my reaction and genuinely grieved, -- and that puzzled me. I honestly think Meudon and the entire valley of the Seine in the Ile de France section meant a billion times more to me than to him, and if the destruction of property was to be regretted, -- and it is always bound to be, I suspect my sorrow over such heavy costs for bringing an eventual Peace was as sincere and deep as his. But he never did get my point.

I am hoping to read a few more pages from the Leahy volume tonight and perhaps I shall appreciate the whole situation of 1941 abroad a little better.

The engineers were back at their tanks and gadgets today. As these are housed under the back gallery, they could work without getting damp this morning. Picture my astonishment this afternoon when I discovered 4 or 5 plantation hands, laboring under the direction of the engineers, digging a huge pit slap in the middle of the greensward, half way between the big house and the African House. Two pipes had already been laid from the concealed tanks on the gallery to this focal point in the open, perhaps 150 feet from the house, -- the pipes slap on top of the ground. I inquired about the excavations and learned a pit was being dug there so excess water from the well could run into it from the tanks, -- a permanent feature for that historic landscape. Imagine. And imagine further how ruffled and outraged were the engineers I put my foot down. Result, aside from all the flying of fur and feathers, -- the pipes were taken up, and run not North but West, disappearing in the iris garden where new excavations were undertaken but not as yet finished when night arrived. It's not the first time I saved a greensward, but it gave me as much satisfaction as any I can think of.....

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Thursday, January 17th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I am not sure of the date, but believe it to be the 17th, for, if memory serves, all Mondays this month are a multiple of 7. But I haven't rounded up this year's calendar as yet, and somehow it seems to me it is the 18th.

Of the enclosures, there isn't anything of interest in Mr. Stern's letter, but I send it along regardless. You will find La Storm in her usual good form, however, and I think you will agree with me her autobiographical note near the beginning, -- as I recall, -- is as clever an idea as one is likely to run across. Surely she is a remarkable person.

Naturally, I don't mind that she sent a quotation from my September letter to the editor of Home Gardening regarding the situation of the white Chinese magnolia and its unexpected carryings on, for publication at the time we move into the major flowering of the Chinese magnolias in general might make as interesting reading in the Spring as last autumn. In responding to La Storm on this point, I shall mention I haven't had the pleasure of hearing from La Bradley as yet in acknowledgement of my letter to her four or five years ago when I observed in a letter to her that Home Gardening readers might find amusement in the serious essay by Bacon along about 1608, when he pointed out that if one wanted to lay out a modest garden, -- modest was his word, one simply had to set aside about 40 acres and go ahead.

As for local doings, both in the ground and the skies, everything was pretty much of a transcript of yesterday, -- continued warm, humid weather, much swinging the spade, and, I hope, an end to the installation of more tanks through which the water must pass on coming out of the well, and excavations into which excess amounts are to be side tracked. The lush brown of new turned soil where a net work of pipes have been put underground gives the back garden the appearance of the scars left by the clearing away of trenches and barricades, but the tender green of the new grass and clover that is spreading across the landscape will eradicate the scars within a few days and, -- let it be hoped, -- the unhistorically minded engineers who came so close yesterday to wrecking the appearance of things generally.

0332

5261

A half a dozen activities today prevented me from turning to the radio for a report on the reception of the master of the late Flying Enterprise and the Congressional session gathered to hear Mr. Churchill. I listened to Edward R. Morrow tonight and if you chanced to hear him, you may recall he devoted the last half of his 15 minute time to an abridged recording of the salient features of the Churchill speech. Imagine my fury when at the split second Mr. Churchill's voice was scheduled to begin, an Esso reported broke in on the broadcast to announce that somebody or other of whom I had never heard had been acquitted after a seven hour deliberation on the part of the Jury. I was so astonished and so furious, I don't even remember the name of the fellow, and as nothing was said as to what the fellow had been accused of, I was just as much in the dark as before, so far as comprehending what the break in was all about. But I am hoping W H O, Des Moines, as that station often does, will re-broadcast the entire speech around 11 tonight.

I had better therefore stick to this machine to knock out a few letters, and not succumb to the temptation to forego radion for the reading machine, which is going to be difficult to resist, for I am enjoying the Admiral Leahy volume tremendously and have to exercise much self control to drop it in favor of sleep.

It's curious how for all these years I have tended to put the Admiral in the "No Like" class, without any precise reason for not liking the man, and now comes his book and I like everything I have read thus far, --and have been impressed thus far in the chapter or two read about his duties starting in 1942 at the White House to find no mention as yet of Harry Hopkins or Mrs. Roosevelt. I reckon they will appear in later chapters.

At long last, and I apologize for the second word, Louisiana seems to have most of itxx the Tuesday votes counted, and it appears by some miracle both the Governor and the Senator lost out with their respective candidates for Governor. And if Judge Kennan wins the February 19th run-off, the Long regime will be out of luck and Louisiana will probably get a less costless administration, although I'm not sure so liberal a one. In the Parish contests, the people I would have voted for won and the hill-billies didn't make first base. It's been nice chatting, and now I must get to work. Hope you are taking care of you....

5262

Friday, January 18th, 1952.

Memorandum: and no picture has been sent.

How nice to find your air mail in today's post.

It is so good to hear from you but again I urge you not to fret about letters at a time when there is such a shortage of time. Just a card or the briefest line to indicate your health is alright is enough to make me experience a feeling of genuine happiness and security, and much of the happiness will stem from the realization that you aren't exhausting yourself by correspondence at a time when so many things conspire to (interruption) at a time when you are prevented from having time to yourself to do as you please.

I shudder at the thought of the 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. session on a so called free day, --free for all of those making frantic efforts to fritter away time on their hands with which they know not what to do, while one who has a billion things to do and is tethered from so much as glancing at any while being thus forced to squander away hours that at best are poor substitutes for undertakings that have primary appeal. To have to grin and bear such things must be maddening and I sympathize with your sentiments whole heartedly.

Frequently, I suppose, we all find ourselves in some such a jam and only those involved can realize all the little necessities that make revolt at the moment seem unwise. But when one is spending the work-a-day week at labor outside the home, it seems but fair he is entitled to do pretty much as he pleases when the week end rolls 'round. But there's a serpent in every Eden, and in the present instance, the reptile is in the form of a waster of time and energy on stuff fit only for dolts, and if you can take it with outward signs of grace, I must commend you for your fortitude, and sometimes if you actually feel like kicking over the traces, I, for one, can readily appreciate your impulse.

The planation had another of those fires today which always seem unbelievable, but which really do happen. About 11 o'clock this morning while I was trashing around in the iris garden, I was startled by the ringing of

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the plantation bell which at any hour save noon means fire. I am always expecting the old store to go up in flames and as the boy friends fine furniture is stored in that building, I am invariably relieved when I learn that place is still intact. It was a house, 4 or 5 years old, about the place where we met Peter as we were heading for the spillway. A 22 year old youth was sitting on the gallery of the house when flames suddenly shot out of the door onto the gallery and he jumped off, just as the house crashed in, burning everything inside and even the chair he had been sitting in. A few years back the same house burned on Christmas Eve when about 20 people were within, all playing cards, and everyone escaped with nothing but the garments on their back, --and I could never understand that either. But I always maintained it must have been a truly fascinating hand of cards.

The weather continues cloudy and warm and the magnolias are approaching a seasonal glory. Pilgrims from Jefferson City Oklahoma City New Orleans and Heaven knows where all, --all during the afternoon. At noon the clerk had trailed me from the iris garden to Yucca by a tell-tale drop of blood along the path. The middle finger of my left hand got messed up a bit, -- I know not how, but the impressive flow of blood was deceptive, for the thing wasn't much, although I hobble along haltingly in prancing up and down this keyboard. Ben is a good doctor and his first aid worked wonders by way of patching up something that wasn't much, save gore, to start with.

You will enjoy the enclosure from little Miss Parrish. I shall write her in a day or two, strongly urging her to do some kind of a "Lanterns on the Levee" thing, including therein a Chapter on H. G. Wells. The pictures she suggests of the stately house of Lamont put into such a tizzy by H. G. is something to contemplate, and I like the idea of a lobster nosegay plastered on the gentleman's dinner coat.

I caught Mr. Churchill's speech before Congress on the re-broadcast and enjoyed it. But what impressed me more than the speech was the fact that "mon ami, Pierre" who couldn't possibly comprehend the meaning of any of it, asked if he might be permitted to listen "to that gentleman what talks so good, 'cause I sure likes the listenin' to the way what he say it." I guess I never heard so profound a compliment concerning the Churchill historic abilities. Remarkable, isn't it.....

Sister 1/18
Miss Alberta 1/13
Essie Mae 1/17

5264

Sunday, January 20th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Continued cloudy and warm, with a short but concentrated cascade of torrents from on high during the night. The primary result, so far as the eye was concerned, was particularly colorful Persian carpets beneath each Chinese magnolia, lush mixtures of brown, tender green as a background for the haphazard assortment of ivory petals, pink, white and purple, and although these latter offered mute evidence that many a blossom had glided from their perches in the trees down to the ground, still the trees themselves presented a more colorful spectacle than before, due to the fact, I suppose, that the rain had not only woven the ground pattern with generous hand, but at the same time had brought forth a greater multitude of flowers on every branch that had seemed so redolent with ivory and pearl before. It seemed a great pity nobody armed with color cameras passed this way to record this miracle of Spring.

Blythe and Ed Rand passed by to bring me a gift from Somebody who was here last week, -- perhaps a Mrs. Ellis Thomas or some such, --I don't seem to remember the individuals. Blythe was on the happy side, but did some moaning about the failure of her favorite candidate to get elected, and, of all things, attributed it in part to the fact that so many negroes voted. Hers is a special kind of racial antipathy. She seems so kind to the individual negro and heartily endorses and assists in rigging up occasions, such as the movies in the negro churches, giving full support to her husband in such ventures, but at the same time seems all up-set, for example, if a negro is permitted to vote. At the same time, she seems to think it is alright for the stupid hill-billies who don't know A. from B. to wrestle with the ballot, but never the negro, regardless of the fact that, like the Joneses, he may be a college graduate.

Well, so much for that, and as she and Ed drove out the side gate, Mrs. Andrew Bowman, husband and a Miss Henderson, came in by the front. Among other things Mrs. Bowman had to tell me was the fact that she had recently met

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(Moclespan)

Mrs. Tucker and that they had had tea together on Saturday, and that she had invited her to drive up to Melrose with her today, but a previous engagement made it impossible for her to accept. I got the impression Mrs. Bowman labored under the illusion that the lady in question was so a special friend of mine. What she thought when an eloquent "Oh" was all I responded to her statement about the acquaintanceship and the invitation.

I neglected desk work last night in order to do a bit of reading. I find the Admiral Leahy volume, "I Was There" to be well contrived. Although the book is more devoted to events than personalities he somehow by an adroit word or phrase, indicate just how much he does or does not like this or that individual. Two people, for instance, whom he seems to like are Harry Hopkins and General MacArthur, while quite obviously two whom he likes not are Mrs. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill.

I continue asking everyone passing this way:

"You all wouldn't want a dog, would you."

and nobody ever says yes. The little white one that stands by me so faithfully, sleeps on my talking book records and generally disports himself with agreeableness, just can't be discouraged. The Dark Duke was driving some 15 miles down below Cloutierville on Friday. I handed him the dog into the cab of the truck and told him to give the dog to any child he could find on the plantation down yonder, and off went Pluto, - an odd name for a female hound. I was gummed up with pilgrims for the next couple of hours, and imagine my surprise when stepping out onto the gallery to find Pluto sitting as cool as a cucumber on the door step.

I guess the enclosures aren't anything special but I send them along regardless. The vagaries of Lyle's Aunt Madue seem to be running true to form and that elusive Dancing Doll or whatever, --it's the one illustrated in the Friends of Joe Gilmore, seems to be still kicking about, but nobody has ever been able to tell me whence disappeared the statuette of Uncle Tom and little Eva which formerly graced my living room, and to my way of thinking, that was a much more entrancing art object.

I am astonished little Miss Alberta not only admits but sets down on paper that she hasn't been feeling up to snuff. Let's hope she isn't losing faith in Mary Baker.....

Pluto

Daisy Bell 1/18/52
Ch. D. Lake 1/11/52

5266

re: Hyman Cohen
Lakeview

Monday, January 21st, 1952.

Memorandum;

Let me hasten to remark upon the new ribbon and to say it is not put on properly, so if in the next word or line this note breaks off abruptly, you will understand, and I shall do some more tinkering on the thing either tonight or on the morrow.

The weather continues warm and humid and gardening goes on apace.

I studiously avoid crossing the fence this afternoon on learning that during the late morning, the Persian cat folded up its heard quite unexpectedly. J. H., mis-speaking told me the doctor had sent the head of the animal to some appropriate center "to see if the cat had rabbi". I don't know if the Persians are Semites or not but suppose, like the Arabs, they may well be, and for all I know a rabbi might be altogether in order.

Supper talk tonight centered on the San Francisco pow-wow of the Republican National Committee. J. H. says the Republican politicians want Taft but are afraid he might not swing the election. They know Eisenhower could win alright, but they also know he isn't tangled up with Republican politics and they fear they might have little or no influence with him. This doesn't seem to be precisely like "having a tiger by the tail", but the quandary is equally perplexing.

J. H. says David Lawrence opines that the General would be as spendthrift as Truman, which seems to put Edward R. Morrow in the wrong, or, perhaps, maybe it merely goes to proclaim David Lawrence is on the Taft side.

Down the road a piece below the spillway lies Lakeview Plantation, separating the Melrose and Magnolia tracts. It is the home of Hyman Cohen, a Polish Jew, born in Russia about 72 years ago. Mr. Hyman is dying, they say, in an Alexandria hospital of cancer. His was a remarkable career. Arriving in this country, he knew neither French or English, which must have been difficult for him in the cane river country, where he made his way, peddling merchandise from a pack on his back. On a winter's day he fell down in the road in front of Zaline's house. She took him in and nursed him for 8 weeks. Later he got a mulatto down the road to let him manage his store for him. By the ~~start~~ end of the season, Mr. Hyman had the store and the mulatto was out in the road.

5267

A 40 acre farm adjoining the store belonged to a poor mulatto woman, for no known reason, frightened pink of the Law. Mr. Hyman told her he was entertaining a gentleman that afternoon, and when the two of them passed her way, he would give her a half dollar with which she was supposed to supply them with a pint of whiskey, after which he would give her a fine present. The woman accommodated her neighbor, and as soon as the gentlemen arrived, she accepted the half dollar and produced the pint of whiskey, where upon the Sheriff's deputy, who was the Cohen companion, clapped the woman into jail. Strange she should be afraid of the Law.

Mr. Hyman, feeling so sorry for her, offered to get her released and thus "saved from Angola". The woman signed some papers, and within a month she was out of jail and Mr. Hyman had her 40 acre home. He did other tricks, and when Zaline once needed to borrow \$80.00, she went to Mr. Hyman and he agreed to advance it if she would sign over her property to him. She wouldn't, although he hadn't as yet said thanks for her nursing that that saved his life.

Today, Mr. Hyman is listed at \$500,000.00, and is probably worth more. He has 4 grown children; all college graduates, and very civilized people, I believe, although I have not seen but two of them, but everyone says the others are just as nice. Thus is an American saga, and thus Mr. Hyman comes to his own reward. I am wondering how the funeral will pan out. All the children and their mother belong to the Catholic Church, as also do the mulatto children and grandchildren whom Mr. Hyman made her husband put off Lake view last year, when, after 40 years, she discovered her chauffeur was in reality her husband's mulatto offspring.

The funeral ought to be really quite good. I should think, if the sepia ones insist on attending, which, I suppose they will not, for I doubt if they are either as wilful or as given to evil as their papa. And yet their papa is really a seemingly kindly man, they say, -- I never saw him, and while it isn't easy to do business with him, -- he owed Melrose \$60.00 for some hay for years while he was a director of a Natchitoches bank, and Melrose never did get the money, although I need not tell you that J. H. certainly got its equivalent and more in merchandise.

And all this is bound to make about the dullest reading you ever encountered, but I pass it along as a 1952 glimpse of doings on Cane River.

And isn't this just the way things always happen, -- nothing to say, and the machine held out.....

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Tuesday, January 22nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

The weather report is different: - fair and cool, with frosts promises for Wednesday and Thursday.

The cool mass of air began seeping in about 3 o'clock, but I had finished about all the outdoor work I had in mind, so didn't object to the appearance of pilgrims.

Dr. Joel Fletcher of Southwestern State College at Lafayette, La., brought his wife to see the magnolia extravaganza. Both were enchanted with the festival, but Mrs. Fletcher was doubly enchanted because it was her first Melrose go-round and she loved it. They invited me to come down for a week end whenever convenient but if possible next month when at the "residence" House there will be guests whom they felt sure I would enjoy, including Harding Carter and John Davis Lodge, grandson of old Henry Cabot Lodge and some kin of Henry Adams. Naturally I demurred and so they asked if they might bring Mr. Carter and siad Lodge for a pilgrimage here, and I allowed as how they could. As I understand it, Lodge is a citizen of Connecticut and represents that State in the same Congress that one of his kinsmen serves in the Senate from Massachusetts. For all I know there may be Lodges living in every one of the 48 States, but somehow I had always thought of them as being a Massachusetts product, which probably was due in part to that old jingle:

"Here's to Massachusetts, the land of the sacred ood,
"Where Cabots speak only with Lodges, and Lodges speak only with God."

I dropped in for a quick cup of coffee at 9 this morning and found Celeste still grieving over the death of her cat. Fortunately, she plans to accompany J. H. to New Orleans this week end for some kind of a cotton council meeting and the prospect of that frolic will perhaps tend to eradicate the depression caused by the death in the family. An untutored resident of the plantation asked me what I thought would be her reaction when Madam Regard passes on. I thought it a good question.

8353

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1952, 1953, 1954, 1955

I got around to read a couple of more pages from the Leahy memoirs last night. I was interested in the account of the journey to Yalta, and the more so because James Byrnes was also a member of the party and had spoken of it at some length, as I recall, in his book on his Governmental experiences. If memory serves me correctly, Mr. Byrnes stressed the fact that Mr. Roosevelt was ailing during the ocean voyage, and that one grave flaw in the pre-Yalta preparations was the fact that nothing had been done by way of briefing the various members of the party to acquaint them with what subjects were likely to come up and what the position would be that the U. S. Government would take in regard to such matters. The Leahy account, on the contrary, speaks of the daily conferences of the top leaders all during the trip, and suggests the President was in no different physical condition than had characterized his state of health during the preceding season. It would be interesting to compare and contrast these two accounts of the same trip more carefully.

Another point that Leahy makes is interesting: - he says he felt during this time that it was already Japan's "goose was cooked", and that it was just a question of time before she would automatically fold up. He says the Army, on the other hand, felt the war in the Orient might probably be long and that an invasion of Japan, which would be costly in men and material, would be a necessity. --and this in contrast to the Leahy concept that Japan, like an over-ripened fruit, would automatically drop by its own weight.

I was a little drowsy, but I gathered that the Army idea prevailed and it was for that reason that one of the primary objects of the Yalta conference was to persuade Staline to declare war on Japan. I suppose it will be a long time before historians decide affirmatively or negatively as to the success, so far as America was concerned, in the Yalta conference, but however it may finally be decided, it will be necessary, I suppose, to weigh the opposing concepts of the Leahy versus Army idea of the proximity of the collapse of the enemy.

I didn't get around to do any mail today, - incoming, and there seemed to be nothing of any moment. Perhaps I shall have better luck on the morrow and thus be able to share a bit of correspondence with you....

1952

James Cain 1/19
Robina 1/19
5270

Res. Gray

Wednesday, January 23rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

Clear and cool and gobs of ozone to make out of that door doings exhilarating.

The mail was inordinately thin today, and just to make it thinner, I cut out a paragraph carrying Mrs. Doty's address which I needed. --Mrs. Doty being an old friend of the Madam to whom I wished to send a little greeting. But I am sending along the balance of the letter, although the news in the opening paragraph will reach you no doubt later than the manuscript to which it refers. In any event, I am glad to know it is on its way. Frankly, I cannot help wondering if having run across a reference to herself in the manuscript, the sender didn't feel impelled to glance through a few more pages which may account for the gap in time between the earlier mention of it to you, and its final delivery.

On Sunday when Blythe was here, she said she hoped to get up sometime during the week to see the magnolias again, but wouldn't come on Wednesday. And so, of course, she came today.

She brought Mrs. Clark with her, whoever Mrs. Clark may be, but withal a nice person who was here with the Garden Club a couple of years ago. Blythe brought me some Taylor's port and a pint of 4 Roses. I use the former but save the latter exclusively for Dr. Rand's use, as his diet prevents him from using wine.

And I have been thinking about that lately, and I am puzzled by it. So far as I know, the alcohol in the wine, like the alcohol in whiskey, is converted into sugar almost immediately on being swallowed. I guess this is the first time I ever knew of anyone who was forbidden wine but permitted whiskey. I wonder if there is anything to such an arrangement, or is it merely because Dr. Rand prefers the latter. I know he isn't allowed Coca-Cola, but I don't know if he may have a go at 7 Up or whatever the other soft drinks may be named. I could easily put myself on a & Up diet, for I never have used it enough to develop any taste for it, and should much prefer water to spoil a drink.

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Of the scores of things I contemplate every day that have come to me through the infinite generosity and thoughtfulness of little Miss Lee, not the least on Monday was a copy of the speech delivered to the Historical Society, for I had in mind knocking off a note to la Storm but didn't feel up to hobbling about much on the keyboard. And so a brief note sufficed, since I had the copy of the speech I could enclose and something tells me la Storm is just the type who would take time out to read it. May I again sayin Blessing On you for the billions of things you do to make every aspect of life run so much more smoothly for me.

And now, in view of your intimate knowledge of little Miss Lee, her tastes, and her domestic arrangements, both animate and inanimate, I want your advice on a point. It stems from the fact that her birthday is some weeks off and I am about to undertake negotiations for an object which I know she would like but which might be too cumbersome for her domestic lay-out. Whatever her decision is, I shall understand perfectly, and although I shall consummate the negotiations successfully I hope, and regardless, I can either hold the thing here for eventual use at Arenbourg or send it along if it will not make too much of a clatter.

It is an ancient copper tray, elegantly severe, with just an inch or so of rise for the rim. It is about 2 feet, a little less, possibly in diameter, and, if not employed as a tray, might lend itself handsomely to a wall decoration. I thought my mention of it in advance might afford an opportunity for Miss Lee to casually drop a word within the next 6 or 7 weeks about interest in copper or the possibility of obtaining a piece of copper reasonably or some such, as a bit of paving the way in advance.

I used to hear Mme. Aubin-Roque fuss about this particular piece which supposedly came down in the Metoyer family from "early times" through Grandpere's brother, Francois Gassion Metoyer. Mme. Aubin was forever complaining it should not have been given Francois Gassion to start with but to Augustin or Suzanne. Be that as it may, my grapevine has just reported to me that it is about to go on the market. I assume it to have been of African origin and quite possibly belonged to Marie Therese, since it seems quite natural she might have had a special inclination for such material, induced by memories of childhood. Please be quite frank in letting me know if the present set up would be easily managed, or if it might be better to skip it this birthday and hold for later consideration. I'm getting it regardless, I think. You might refer to it as the Francois Gassion item, and please be quite frank about it.....

Mrs. Wagner 1/18
Sarah L.C. Clapp
1/18
5272

Thursday, January 24th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so a couple of gentle breezes came seeping up from the Gulf and the threatened freeze faded out of the picture before it had even appeared. Accordingly today was one of those blue and gold affairs, - and withal excellent for the color camera enthusiasts.

Picture my surprise along about 3 o'clock this afternoon when, in crossing the cattle gap in front of Celeste's on the way to the store to have a long legged wood's sprite jump out from somewhere, making strange, high-pitched noises, and throwing long, lanky arms around my neck. It was none other than little Miss Dormon, -- Caroline in person, with "ole Virginia" parked in their car, -- the one given them by la Storm, hidden behind the bamboo of the side gate.

The Dormons are, certainly sights, with Caroline looking like a lady ghost, what with the skin drawn pretty tight over her attenuated bones, and "ole Virginia", I thought, looking better than I had ever seen her before. Caroline's voice gets a pitch that approaches the height of a Georgia pine, but her sister who always had something of a whiskey none of depth to hers, along with a vague rasp of some sort, seems to have developed a modulation of great charm, no doubt due to the throat operation she underwent last Spring, or when ever.

The Chinese magnolias, I suppose, were what brought the Dormons, if, indeed, they ever have any particular reason for doing anything, and Caroline flew about from tree to tree, taking pictures and generally babbling at full tilt like a brook just released from a long Winter's casing office.

I remarked that the last time they were here, January was the month, too, but the year was 1950, and they brought "a Mrs. Storm" with them. Caroline didn't say anything about providing me with the lady's address, but rattle along at a great rate, telling me about how Mrs. Storm is doing, what she is up to, and so on and so forth. I, naturally, paid polite attention but never indicated any contact with the lady.

I asked her about how the S
tarks &°

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She told me about the giant white azelia the Starks moved to Orange from The Cottage. She said it was cut into 4 sections, placed on flat cars, and sent by rail. And that all sounded wonderful to me, since I have no idea how anyone would go about cutting a bush with a 60 foot spread into 4 parts and then succeed in making it grow, as was the case to hand, and of all places, on the top of the hill on the artificial island the Starks build in their lake.

There was a heap more chatter, but I don't think of anything of interest. She invited me to come to spend the day at Briarwood within the next month when the dogwood and some of the late blooming daffodills will be in flower. We shall see about that spending the day business, but I have difficulty envisioning it from this spot on the calendar.

As the Dormons drove away, the officials of the Red Cross based on Atlanta, and heading for I know not where, stopped at the front gate, under the guidance of some Parish Red Cross official. Two of the men were doctors and the third some civilized person out of the same State that produces people like the Talmadges. They were delighted with what they had to see, and one of them asked if he might recommend Melrose to a friend living on a Carolina plantation somewhere near Cypress Gardens, --which, I believe, is the general neighborhood of The Bluff plantation, although I am not sure of the latter's precise situation. I believe he said the man's name is Flynn and is possessed of poor vision, a wife of vast charm and a brief metropolitan career before his lamps began flickering. I declare Melrose gets more and more like the terrace of the Calle de la Paix, and if you sit in either place long enough, everyone on earth will eventually pass by.

Tonight, I regret to report, I am to be counted among the great unwashed. Those infernal engineers began fiddling with the well and the entire water system along about midday, and they were still staggering around in the dark at 8 o'clock tonight. Why they had to cut off the system before I got around to work on my long beard or jump through a quick shower, I wouldn't know. Suffice it is to say there isn't a drop of water nearer than the bottom of one of the big cisterns, much too far from Yucca to provide me with any dampness.

I think the enclosures are of scant interest, but I pass them along regardless. Today's post was light, I am glad to say, for eventually, perhaps, I may get caught up, but heaven knows when.

Carolyn Ramsey 1/25/52

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Friday, January 25th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The thermometer at 80 and gay breezes from the Gulf tossing pink and purple magnolia petals in every direction. And, marvelous to relate, there is running water in my bathroom.

As for the mail, it wasn't so very extraordinary, although the Ramsey communication was unexpected. I gather she had quite a rough time of it during the holidays, and my heart goes out to everyone going through such a horror. But the letter still doesn't explain how it was December 7th and 8th came and went without so much as a peep from the lady. I think she is remarkably gifted and utterly undependable, and I like her for her graces and lack of them, but I count not at all on doing anything with her, although I do not count out such a possibility, -- although all such matters scarcely fall within the realm of probabilities, so far as I can judge future plans by past performances.

I think it was Helen who once remarked that Carolyn acts on impulse, and I gather that a course once charted is likely to be forgotten at any time, once the lady mariner moves beyond the inspiration of an immediate associate or is enticed in another direction by some new impulse. So far as her own career is concerned, I reckon all this makes comparatively little difference to her, and I doubt if she has ever stopped to realize, -- as it is her moral duty to do, how considerably it might effect others associated with her from whom she is want to fade out of the picture but completely on occasion. Well, that isn't all, but that's enough at this sitting for that little minx.

In spite of all the tanks and paraphernalia, the elaborate water system seems to be inadequate to supply all the outlets to all the houses, store, garage and gardens with filtered water, and so a dual system is being contrived, in which the big house, Celeste's house and Yucca will be on the purified, de-ironized net work, and the balance of the outlets will supply water directly from the well without going through all the intermediary excitement. Everything went swimmingly in the putting down of new pipes until they reached almost to my gate, whereupon the pipes ran out and

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more had to be ordered from Alexandria. And so tonight and this week end, I am continuing on well water and shall have purified liquid along about Monday, but while that will be pleasant, I am sufficiently entranced to have any at all that I am not complaining.

I may or may not have mentioned a house burned down on the place last Friday. It was but 4 or 5 years old. But before the foundations were cool, J. A. had another going up to take its place, and the new one will be completed in a little over a week, - perhaps by Monday, after which the builders are scheduled to move in the direction of Yucca which is greatly in want of having some more substantial foundations rigged up and some new sills put under it. I think this is going to be a much bigger job than anyone suspects, but so long as I get the thing started, it will be carried through alright, I believe. Most of the work will be done on the gallery giving on the white garden, and on the East and West ends of the house. After Sunday's services in the Chapel, I am going to remove the stained glass, the statue, etc., until the workmen have accomplished whatever they get around to do by way of teasing up and hammering down. I think I shall install the stained glass and the Blessed Martin in my bath room, which certainly out to lend a gay and colorful note to the department, don't you think so?

I shopped around in the ether waves last night, trying to find a broadcast of the Dewey idea on Foreign Relations, but stopped short when I heard the Screen Guild players announced as about to present "The Postman Always Rings Twice" by one James M. Cane, which I had never heard and never read.

The thing seem well presented, but when anythin is cut to a half hour or less, I suppose it is likely to give a correct or incorrect synopsis of the original opus. Nevertheless I had enough of it to better understand Mr. Cane's contempt for moonlight and honeysuckle when speaking of the old South, for in the play in question, at least, it was one of those reality minds that was obviously at work, one that deals with facts and realities, and rules out the more subtle things as non-existent, - the thing which nevertheless seem quite real to me, such as the same moonlight and honeysuckles without which I couldn't imagine the South.

The usual number of pilgrims passed this way today, including Blythe and a bevy of bags who had spent the day at bridge with her at the camp. Fortunately it was late when they arrived, and as I was tired with digging, had no inclination to tour. Do hope you are getting a hint of Spring.....

Madam Mign

1/16/52

5276

Sunday, January 27th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your fat envelope in Saturday post, containing the Storm correspondence. I neglected to say I didn't want it back, for you may always feel perfectly free to dispose of any communications as seems best, unless I make strange noises about this item or that for reference. But I appreciate your kindness in sending them along, and, if the post doesn't gang up on me early this coming week, I may glance over one of them a second time, although such an opportunity is seldom afforded.

It began raining heavily Saturday noon, and it has alternated with sprinkles and heavy showers ever since. Tonight it is pouring cats and dogs and the night is darker than Egypt, save for an occasional flash in the Northern sky indicating, I suppose, a cold air mass is stalled up Oklahoma way, probably, since the illuminations have been going on intermittently for the past 24 hours. If the thing will just stay stalled, I shall be well satisfied.

Celeste took Madam Regard to South Louisiana yesterday, returning alone last night, and taking off early this morning with J. A. for two or three days in the Crescent City. Pat came in last night but left today after dinner, and as Ben is courting at the college, I seem to be pretty much alone and am liking it.

I had hoped to get a bit of reading done during the day, what wit all the dews and damps out of doors, but the latter in no way discouraged pilgrims, and I spent the better part of the afternoon sloshing around in the mud with them. The last go-round was a first dark when some Kansas friends of J. A. blew in, strong, and after they had departed, I closed that department for this week end.

I finished the Leahy book which I found informative and interesting, although some of the data covering the Yalta and Potsdam conferences seemed a bit repetitious, since James Byrnes seemed to cover that phase of thin s pretty thoroughly in his "Speaking Frankly". What I liked about the Leahy thing was his impressions of old Petain which seemed to be sympathetic. I suppose Petain will long remain a controversial figure, and even yet I am not sure the opinion I have of him is

5277

very just. I guess I think he was quite wrong in not moving the Government to Africa and thus get down to business on the side of the Democracies. But perhaps after all the experiences he had had in French politics and saw at what a poor level Democracy could function, he wasn't sure he wanted any more of that kind of stuff, even thought, on the other hand, he didn't like the Hitler business. Laval seems to have been the devil in the piece, but everybody knows that. As I recall the Laval girl married one of the de Chambruns and I am wondering what happened to her after her papa got properly knocked in the head. Somebody once told me she seemed like a nice person, poor thing.

I have a few letters to write and along about 9 o'clock I have a light supper to attack which will be shared with me in part by Die Frau even as was yours on one occasion with Grandpa. It would be even nicer if Die Frau and Grandpa could have a set-to of their own, and little Miss Lee might drop in to have a go with me at some fried chicken, potato salade, deviled eggs, tuna sandwiches, cherry pie and a tall glass of cold milk. I expect to undertake all this leisurely and absorb a bit of music along with the doings. If I am still wide awake, I think I shall read a couple of pages from Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick's "The Man of Nazareth" or whatever his study of Jesus is called, and shall probably brew me a fine cup of tea before calling it a day.

The 6 o'clock weather report indicates three and a half inches of rain have fallen within the last 24 hours but patches of stars off to the North hold the promise of fair weather on the morrow, and what with the dry weather that has obtained for so long, the ground will probably absorb all the moisture almost immediately. The last week in January and the first in February seem to represent the cold hump of this area, and if we bridge the next ten days without any bitter blasts, we stand a good chance for a continuation of the Spring which has been everywhere in evidence thus far in the New Year. Already the cannas are 8 or 10 inches high and horn-like projections, the delicate soft red, proclaim the butterfly lilies as already making up their minds.

And here I am at the bottom of the page and have forgotten to ask you a favor in regard to the attached label. Sometime, if convenient, and it doesn't matter if it isn't accomplished before summer, I wonder if you could type the address of Walter Frase for me, with my name as the sender. I have in mind sending him a Melrose plate with a brief line, suggesting he might be interested in it, in view of the chapters on Melrose appearing in his publication, Friends of Joe Wilmore. Don't you think so.....

Darry Dell 1/24
5278

Monday, January 28th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Forty millions times would not suffice to say how entranced I am to have your grand greetings as of the 21st, and registered on the 22nd, which apparently just missed delivery on Saturday last past.

Yesterday's rains gave way to clear skies today, and there will be birthday celebrations at Arenbourg before the week has played out.

Frankly, I have but half read your letter, the half being not a section, but rather a somewhat vague skimming over of the whole thing. The more accomplished secretary, Y. C., is in bed with a fever which means I must lean on junior Fugabou who, stutteringly, must spell out each word, and as he isn't sure of many of his letters, I proceed but slowly in deciphering the individual words. Accordingly I find myself so intent on guessing the letters of which each word is made up that sometimes I almost forget what has gone before by way of ideas. But at least I have the major flow of thought and with Y. C. being in circulation again on the morrow or next day, I shall have an opportunity to run through the entire letter in a less piece-meal fashion.

It goes without saying that I am entranced at the evidence that you enjoyed a momentary break in the hurly-burly of life and the arrival of the Storm correspondence on Saturday gave me a great lift, --that which you returned to me, for while I didn't explore its contents, it was enough to see your hand writing on the envelope which gave me a vast sense of gratitude in the realization that you were up and about.

With your blessings for Arenbourg, I am particularly anxious to undertake further celebrations in that department but I shall probably have to brood on the matter from Yucca for a day or so, what with all the doings going on here at the moment. This morning I removed everything from the gallery giving on the White Garden, --everything except the millstone and the St. Giffin Fountain, placing all the countless pieces of furniture on the South gallery. I also but completely dismantled the Chapel, including the fluted column, pews, statue, cross, chairs, candlesticks, etc., in anticipation of workmen arriving on the morrow to start jacking up the house. Workmen were busy all day laying down new pipe and connecting Yucca with the new well flowing from beneath the gallery at Melrose.

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"In men whom men condemn as ill
I see so much of goodness still,
In men whom men pronounce divine
I see so much of sin and blot, --
I hesitate to draw the line
Where God has not."

I am delighted to discover that what I had started out with under the supposition that it was a blank sheet was, in reality, not a blank sheet at all, but rather one that had already been used when yesterday I asked a passing pilgrim to dictate a couple of lines that struck me as being much to my liking. After the lines had been quoted, the Kansas pilgrim checked on my handiwork, and, finding it wanting, was kind enough to pencil in whatever I had omitted. I am so glad to be able to pass these lines along to you for I'm under the impression you will find them as much to your liking as did I.

Although I say so only after pausing to knock wood, I believe the final pipes have been put under ground and no more beds of lilies and canas will have to be picked up to make room for additional intruders. By a piece of good fortune, one of the pipes leading to Yucca collapsed before the work had been completed, -- that is one of the more ancient pipes leading into the house to which the new pipes had been connected, so that with an adequate force and paraphernalia readily to hand, things could be put into ship-shape style, -- once and for all.

It is pleasant to report, also, that I took occasion, what with an ample supply of workmen, to put the sun dial back on its effluited pedestal. I think I mention it gently collapsed one day last fall. Pilgrims passed this way just as the great steel bands were being set into position, and so I left the final adjustments to the negroes who were undertaking the job. -- Ezra, Cy, Fugabou and Kurt, -- and much to my delight, when returning to have a final look at the completed job and both pilgrims and negroes had departed, I discovered that, with typical African touch, they had bolted the great disks down so that the central one does not face Yucca at precisely right angles, but rather turns a big to the East, giving it just the proper twist that makes it at once more completely disdainful of whatever hours the sun may care to record. Naturally I wouldn't have the thing set right for anything.

You will be interested in the enclosure in so far as it relates to poor Weeks Hall. What in the world do you suppose happened? But I must bring this to an abrupt halt. May I again say thank you for all the happiness your letter has brought to me and

5280

Tuesday, January 29th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A lovely day, cloudless and cool. Tonight it is equally cloudless and the weather man says the thermometer will drop to 32. I suppose it is just as well if it does, although it does seem unfortunate that so many things will have to be frosted back to the starting point.

But at the same time, it must be admitted that everything is too far in advance of the season and unless the seasonal routine is re-established, we shall be coasting into summer before March 21st heralds the advent of Spring.

I spent the morning at Arenbourg and was astonished at the progress things have been making in departments I have lately ignored as I busied myself in other directions. Here is how the thing twists into the incredible: -- the narcissus, which were held back from blooming in November by last summer's prolonged heat, are just now unfolding in full flower, -- a full couple of months behind schedule, whereas, in sharp contrast, the butterfly lilies and Vinoco banas which never make up their minds before early or mid March, are all making great displays of activity, and in some quarters where the lilies are a bit sheltered, they have already attained a height of 6 or 8 inches. With late January and early February almost invariably a time of frosts, if not snow, this out in front departure of vegetation is truly remarkable, and I only hope they don't get themselves so far "out on a limb" that they crash completely when Jack Frost, tiring of the Northern tier, reporting 5 to 15 below zero this morning, decides to have a go at this flourishing neighborhood. The grass in front of the big house is 6 inches high, and will require a lawn mower before the week end if there isn't some promise of a slowing up of things. So turns our unusual winter of 1952.

I regret to report that my secretaries continue to languish indoors. Perhaps they will make it on the morrow. There wasn't so much mail today, but even so, I don't like to let it start piling up. It puts such a strain on my feeble brain in I end up by trying to absorb 20 letters at a sitting and remember half the points in each that may call for later reference. Among the other pieces coming to hand is a letter

0882

5281

from la Storm, and a larger envelope which seems to include a flock of newspaper clippings and photographs, and I believe some typed material relating, I suppose to The Bluff plantation. I hope the lady is in no rush for the return of this data, for I should like to explore it myself in part before sending it on to you, if you will not be burdened by such a conglomeration of things. I am not quite certain, but I have the impression that you may have more opportunity to read, as for example, when en route to mid-town, so that such material may not put any strain on you, for well do I realize there may be moments that may be snatched for glancing through papers although the absence of a typewriter or the impending presence of others during such odd moments may make taking pen in hand almost impossible. And so, unless I hear to the contrary, I shall try to get someone to glance over some of the Storm clippings within the next few days, and, if I do not hear to the contrary regarding your wishes, I shall assume I may send them along to you before returning them to Moncks Corner. In the event you should have no time to glance over them, don't hesitate to just send them slap back, and I shall understand perfectly.

It looks like a letter may be to hand from the Harnesses,-- at least the cancellation is California and the envelope is addressed in long hand, and these items along with one or two other non-descript things are tucked away in the armoire, along with your sketchily read letter of yesterday, awaiting a return to health and labor on the part of a secretary.

J. A. is a sight. He telephoned from Alexandria this afternoon, having flown up from the Cotton Council meeting in New Orleans to attend a Farm Board meeting, after which he hopped back on another plane to be present at another session in the Crescent city this evening, after which he and Celeste will drive back home.

The engineers descended on the place again today, but decided the well water was functioning alright and so tore up nothing, thank heavens. The carpenters, scheduled to start jacking up 'ucca, didn't finish their jobs elsewhere on the plantation, so I continue to sit among an amazing assortment of plunder inside the house while the gallery and chapel remain great open spaces. Fortunately the pilgrims business was scant today enabling me to get quite a few things done, and I'm hoping I am enjoy an equal break on the morrow.

I am especially entranced at tomorrow's dawn and the opportunity I shall have to spend another morning at Arenbourg with further celebrations to be pondered over. I want to read a little from the Fosdick opus tonight but am so sleepy I fear I shall not get far.....

0882

2nd y re Jle

card from Mary-
5282 Beth Davis
Haiti 1/26
Rafina 1/26

Wednesday, January 30th, 1952.

Memorandum: Beth Davis

How nice to find your Saturday letter in today's post. Not only was it a delicious chat but it held the promise, too, that for a little while at least, you were able to experience "cleared decks", meaning, I suppose, that for a little while, at least, your menage wasn't completely bogged down with succrying nomades from below the Gulf.

And how nice of you to tell me of what came to hand in the post from little Miss Denholme. And also my thanks for giving me an account of the periods covered by what came to hand. Am I right in my understanding that a second shipment is to be expected from the same source, and if so, are you and I to understand that the lady may have sampled a little of the first batch and is perhaps skimming through the balance. This would be a surprise, for I think the lady, who never did comprehend what I could see in old "atchez", might well be expected to find such data might dull going.

And how nice of you to offer to transcribe certain portions for me, but let me run on to say that I pray you not to do so, for frankly and honestly I haven't a soul to explore such ancient history with me, and while there is always hopes that the general intellectual attributes of the secretariat may improve eventually still the chance of such a thing is remote, and if and when it does take a turn for the better, there will probably be such a stack of "must" stuff that I shall never be able to afford the luxury of peeping back as far as 1939 and 1940.

I keeping the Journal in those days, I was motivated by many impulses. The Nadine wire was a billion times better than nothing, but even at best it was intermittent, and as nobody at the time could foresee how a better connection might be established, and there was uncertainty if I should ever be able to pass the sheets along to the one person in the world I most wanted to have them, I probably made them more impersonal than they otherwise might have been, and although I never had one of them read back to me, I suppose

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I may have included lots of things over and over again, and perhaps put down a lot of non-essential details that in light of today's reading must make exceedingly dull going.

I reckon another element adding to the boring details included in the Journal, --aside from my natural ability to make such subjects inordinately dry, -- was the fact that I was ever mindful of Journals I had read, especially plantation diaries, which I loved so much that I was forever saying to myself: --"If only the diarist had touched on this point, note this particular or elaborated on that episode....." And the net result of such disappointments led me to insert an endless flock of details which seemed to me might lend greater clarity to particulars which were set down more as a catalogue of places, people and peculiarities than anything else, since there was never any thought of style of composition.

I must confess that with the flight of a decade and all the changes wrought by the flight of time and the vast alteration of circumstances obtaining both in the Natchez country and in this Cape River region, I probably would find, were I to re-read any of the data, that the phase of civilization which I reported in those days has already faded, and in many instances, especially in the Natchez country, the more prosaic, run-of-the-mill conditions obtaining elsewhere across the country replaces what I saw in those years. I should rather have your opinion and impressions than anyone's, and I shall welcome your frank statements as to whether you feel this material may be of value to people in years to come. If it does hold something of that nature in its endless verbiage, then it will not have been wasted time entirely. And if it doesn't report such circumstances very clearly, it may serve to amuse some antiquarian, perhaps, in years to come, and, if so, it might well be passed along to some institution when we are finished with it. Otherwise it might as well be tossed into a basket of trash when you are finished running through it. I leave the decision entirely to you, for, as indicated above, it is your judgement alone that counts with me regarding the whole thing.

The weather has warmed and dirt is flying. I telephoned Dr. Knipmeyer to fetch along his little black bag on the morrow, for I think a timely bit of penicillin will eradicate a momentary kidney business, or some such, for I seem to have a very slight cold, but what little there is seemed to settle in that department.

I'm so glad you are enjoying la Baumont. Perhaps a picture will be made of her career some day, and it still seems to me it would be interesting. I'm so happy to have your nice letter...

P.S. I don't need enclosure.

5284

Thursday, January 31st, 1952.

Memorandum:

Today has been distinctly on the hurly-burly side, and the ensuing memo will be of no interest, so if you are pressed for time, just skip it and you will have missed nothing.

I got a shot this morning and I am accordingly feeling quite up to snuff, as the re-action always seems to be immediate. And I could stand normalcy again, for there was been much carryings-on. With one crew working in the bamboo to clear out the dead stalks, and another crew removing the brick pavement from the gallery and doing all sorts of strange things with huge pries and jacks, and the usual encumbrance of passing pilgrims, not to mention a pin point drizzle, and you can readily imagine I was entranced when first drak finally put in its quieting appearance.

It seems there is a new wrinkle on the Shreveport-Cloutierville front, just come into view. It seems Dr. Wenk is going in for a big of two office business, with Shreveport being given the advantage of his presence from Monday until Friday morning, and Cloutierville the balance of the week. This of course means that this bend of the river will doubtlessly be honored by visitations on Fridays, Saturdays and possibly a bit of Sundays, at least until the Cloutierville property is disposed of, which, let us hope, may not be too long in being accomplished.

I saw Celeste for a few moments this morning. She reports a delightful frolic in New Orleans, attending the races and heaven knows what all. She left right after lunch today, heading for Mansura where she will spend the night and tomorrow morning will pick up Adam Regard and return here.

I learned today that when J. H. got off the plane to stretch his legs a bit at Baton Rouge the other day, on his return to New Orleans from Alexandria, he discovered the General's wife getting off the same plane. They had both been in the same machine from Alexandria to Baton Rouge but didn't chance to see each other. The lady had been spending a week with kin folks in Shreveport while the General was in New York. I marvel at the way people do get around, but envy them not at all.

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I got around to read a couple of pages from the Fosdick book last night, -- "The Man From Nazareth". It contains much data on the Palestine of the 1st century, together with no end of research concerning the various religious groups, social customs and so on and is altogether informative. As in the case of one or two other religious books I have read during the past year, it strikes me if a minister would read a chapter each week instead of floundering around in his pulpit, wrestling with a lot of hocus which means little or nothing to any of his parishioners, he would do well, and might even end up by getting a more fulsome congregation.

And speaking of religious, I had to put a little in practice today, although God will scarcely forgive me for my avarice, for I acted with secret yearning for what I gave away. Quite out of no where came a kitten, perhaps half grown who was sitting on my doorstep last evening. What attracted me to the animal was his affectionate personality, and the fact that his gray and white coloring was almost identical to that of Die Frau. I could easily use another cat and I think it would be nice to have such a perfectly matched pair. But I had heard that the overseer's cat had died a couple of months back and he had been casting about for one, and so I sent Junior Die Frau along to him, and this morning at the store, he told me how pleased he was with his new pet and that before going to bed last night he was doubly pleased when the new pet caught a rat -- slap. and so Die Frau and I remain alone, but the overseer doesn't and I am glad for pet and master they are hitting it off, apparently, to each other's satisfaction -- but I still could use the second cat.

I find myself wondering about the political pots that seem to be cooking around the country, -- New Hampshire this week, and from then on until the convention, I suppose. Surely Mr. Taft thinks he has a chance to win the nomination, or he wouldn't be beating the drum from Wisconsin to Florida. And although it seems preposterous, I suppose there is a chance he might receive the nod, for surely none of the professional politicians who run the Chicago Convention in June are really going to want the General as standard bearer, for were the General to be nominated and elected, the Republican politicians would find themselves having little or no control over the President. -- a sensation the Republican politicians have never experienced, I suppose, since the death of Lincoln, or possibly Johnson. I certainly didn't understand how Taft won such a thumping victory in Ohio in race for a Senator's seat, and I can't believe he would win so impressively, were he to run for the Presidency, in fact I would pray he might be trounced, but I suppose it is possible he might get the nomination and win, -- I hope not. But now I must fold, happy to have had your two letters this week.....

5286

Friday, February 1st, 1952.

Memorandum:

According to the calendar, tomorrow is Ground Hog Day, but so far as today and I am concerned, it must be hot dog, just after going through the grinder, so far as I am concerned. At least that is the way I feel, and for no other reason than the outlandish doings of the Wenks.

To begin with, it poured all day, much to my regret, for the excavations made under Yucca yesterday, with a view of setting blocks under the new sills, were soon filled with water running to the lower levels of the holes dug, and soon filling them to their full three foot depth. Naturally the workmen couldn't do anything, and will be lucky if they can even take a crack at things by Monday. But sometime during the week the job will be undertaken, much to my regret, for it will be accomplished long before the earth beneath the new foundations will have properly dried and solidified.

Three times today I got soak, but thoroughly -- digging ditches at Arenbourg, digging ditches at Yucca and finally getting a drenching when I discovered cows had invaded Melrose and were chewing up the camellias. Then I thought I would have a hot bath, but pilgrims, -- colored pilgrims arrived, -- school teachers who pass Melrose every week day and of course they would have to select such a time when everything was under water to have a go-round. Naturally, had they seen white folks, I would have merely said "No Go", but if I said so to colored, they probably never would come back, mistaking my invitation for a more favorable tour as a polite way of saying No.

And then it was supper time, and as the four hundred thousand units of yesterday's shot (or a touch of cold, or perhaps just plain exhaustion induced me to eat nothing but bread and milk, which I like very much, although Eugene dined on fried chicken. And we ate alone, since Ben went this morning to Fort Worth for some cattle show, and J. H. was in Monroe. I learned from Eugene the ladies across the fence had returned this morning and I thought of passing by to say howdy, but I was too exhausted, and instead, simply came home, jumped into a hot tub and before 6:30 was stretched out on my downy couch.

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A half hour later and someone tapped at my door. It was Lloyd, the eldest Wenk offspring. As I opened the door, he said: "Supper is ready". but when he saw me in my bathrobe, he asked if I would rather have his mother bring supper over here. I would not. And so I got dressed and went over to the big house, finding the lady pretty high. She offered me a drink and I was glad to accept. I ate some supper. She asked if we might sit in the library. We might, --and did, and the children were diddling back and forth, as was their dappled dachshund. Sister asked me if she could borrow my belt. I gave it to her. She got up and beat her daughter. Then one of the boys passing in back of the sofa said the dog was sick. Servants were screamed for and there was much ado. She was telling me about denouncing her mother-in-law. Then one of the children came running in to say the dog was flattened on the gallery and was dying. The doctor had gone to bed, but was summoned. The dining room table was used for an examination table. The dog had convulsions, and I held it while the doctor administered sedatives. I opined the dog had bitten into a rat, killed by 1080 poison, and explained castor oil was the antidote. There was no castor oil in any of the houses, and nobody had a key to the store. Sister went to Celeste's to inquire about some, and ended up by denouncing her because her name had appeared in the Times-Picayune a couple of years ago as "Mistress of Celrose". She denounced her, apparantly on a heap of scores. She returned to the big house but nobody volunteered getting castor oil from local neighboring stores. The dog continued his convulsions, and Sister said what he needed was soda and water. The doctor demurred, saying the jaws were locked and pouring water into his mouth through his clinched teeth would suffocate him, and so Sister took charge and pour oceans of soda water in and about his mouth and head. The dog convulsed violently and died..

Then there really was a commotion and Sister explained to the several negroes about that Celeste is a bastard and a son of a bitch and that she wouldn't spend the night on the same plantation where she was. Eventually I got her quieted down a little, and after a few secret conferences between her and Attie, the cook, who doesn't like Celeste, I got Sister up stairs, went to Celeste's and got the doctor who had gone there, I suppose, to apologize for his wife's behavior, and here I am. I still did right in not letting Sister come here, and naturally with people like that, had I intimated I wasn't up to par, there would have been so much additional excitement, I wouldn't be alone yet. But now I am, and have given you a glimpse of "My Day", and now I shall read a page from Dr. Fosdick, and then fold up my beard, and is that bed going to feel good....

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Sunday, February 3rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

There is so much to be thankful for, if one would but cast about for one's blessings. In the first place, the weather has been cool and clear, not too cool, not too clear, and cloudy enough yesterday so the old Ground Hog didn't see his shadow.

And although we had the Wenks on our hands Saturday afternoon until dark, they, too, added a blessing by going home, and it will not be before Friday, I hope, that we have another go-round.

And it would appear, too, that the Cloutierville venture will not be long lived, either, and when it passes out, there will be no excuse for us to be honored by their presence every 7 days. I learned only this evening that the lady doctor is planning to set up a drug store in Cloutierville, --the first it has ever had, and to hold a clinic down there twice a week, and that another Natchitoches doctor is planning to hold clinics there the day the lady doctor remains in town. That ought to just about take the cream off the medical gouging on Fridays and Saturdays, and so, once the clinic has been opened, there ought to be no financial excuse for the Shreveport department to descend on the Cane River country like a locust.

My sniffles seem to be lingering on and a slight headache suggests I would do well to fold up my beard early tonight, which I think I shall do.

I had expected to do just that right after returning from dinner across the fence today, but just as I got ready to flatten out my old secretary, Murel, appeared on the scene, unheralded and unexpected. He looks fine and plans to be her for two or three days before going to California to head out for New Brunswick, N. J. whence he will depart for Germany. In short, -- and he is quite short, -- he is getting a glimpse of the world, and as he acquired himself a bride in California, he has something to look forward to by way of establishing a home on his return to civilian life.

After he had departed, I took a hot toddy and heavy it was with whiskey, and started to collapse when the Mayor of Natchitoches knocked on my door. We seldom see each other

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but we are good friends, nevertheless, and I was glad to meet the two couples he brought with him. One of the couples hailed from Shreveport, the other,-- and Judge and Mrs. Wilson, came from Boston, Mass. I gave them a fair tour, reversing the usual progress, since they had arrived at my doorstep. We accordingly ended up in the library of the big house, where I thought I would show them, among other things, the Lafayette masonic apron, - asking them if anyone present might be a Mason. They laughed, as did I, when it turned out that Judge Wilson is supreme mogul of all Masonic confabs in North America, - or some such, --and the other gentleman was something in the same organization in the South. Naturally they were entranced at what they had to see, and the Judge immediately asked me if I thought there would ever be a chance of placing the apron along side George Washington's Masonic emblems in the Scottish Rights building in Washington, or on the Way to Alexandria, Va., or where ever the building is. I remember the monumen quite well, but hadn't thought about it in years. I told him I thought that should be its eventual resting place and concurred with him that such an historic relic somehow loomed larger than just a mere piece of privat property. He said he was going to write me about it on his return to Boston. I shall handle the letter as circumstances develope, for I don't want to let it be a wedge by which the whole library might slip.

Just after the Mayor and his party had left, Mr. Kerry tapped at my door, as I was heading out for a bite of supper across the fence. He is the father fo Bessie's two children,-- Orellia's sister, if you recall. His wife died a couple of months ago and he asked me what I thought about him marrying Bessie. I told him I thought he should. He said he had made up his mind and had come to ask if he could get Bessie baptised at St. Augustin's before her marriage, if I would stand as her godfather. I told him I would be proud to do so. And so he went off happy and I went on my way with a headache.

But enough of my ailments, and besides, tomorrow's dawn will see the workman jacking up the house, I suppose, -and I had better get some shut-eye, so I may be a-stir before they get to going.

The grass looks so green and pretty and the plants so heavy with buds that it is a inspiration just to walk in the open air. Hope you had an opportunity to do so today....

Robina 2/1 5290
DD 1/31

Monday, February 4th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Now that Spring is supposed to be in the offing, the thermometer is dropping, and tonight's low is predicted at 35, which clearing skies during the night and sunshine and cold for the morrow. As frost gets in its work at about 42, I bestirred myself to drape a few of the more delicate things at Yucca and Arenbourg, for even though 35 wouldn't "cook" anything, still a covering will prevent the more delicate edges from getting curled up into an unpleasant brown coloring.

From the undated enclosure, probably posted on Friday, -- the cancellation was blurred, I notice the "second" shipment has been transferred. From that I take it the bulk of the business has been effected, although I am not certain if the "second" meant the final or not. Anyway, I hope you aren't bogged down by all the trash, and if ever it becomes cumbersome, and a repository is required, you will always, of course, feel free to house the same down this way somewhere if you care to do so.

The colored supervisor of the house jacker-uppers did not appear today, as he is down with the influenza. I reckon lots of people are, and I suppose I was lucky in taking the shot on Thursday which, without realizing the virus was in the offing, I may have knoed it in the head when I was intending that the stuff should be concentrated on another section. Anyway, my headache has vastly improved and while I have a bit of huskiness in the throat, I am otherwise alright. By good fortune, J. H. sent me a nice warm shirt as a gift today, -- and while I usually don't go in for heavy shirts, this one is timely, what with the thermometer sagging, and I shall make the most of it on the morrow.

After the hurly-burly of uncontrolled emotionalism and crack-brained doings of Sister on Friday and Saturday, I shouldn't have supposed I could have re-acted sympathetically to any form of emotionalism on the following Monday, but I did this morning, although it was in quite a different category.

It happened this morning about 7 when I responded to a tap on my door. There stood a stalwart Ethiopian youth, perhaps about 25, crying softly, an occasional brush of a big paw, to eradicate the tears. I couldn't imagine what was

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"worrying" him but concluded that whatever it was a glass of wine and a chair by the fire might make his speech a little more comprehensive. It turned out that he had been delegated by the congregation of St. Mary's on the Bayou at yesterday's meeting to act as a bearer of a "pronouncement", as he styled it, addressed to me. I had sent the Church a plate and it seems the congregation wanted to say thanks in some formal manner, and so said "pronouncement" had been composed. --and I'll bet it was something, --and the youth entrusted with delivery this morning. But on the way, --he had ridden up on horseback, the "pronouncement" somehow had jogged out of his pocket. It was not yet dawn when he had arrived at Melrose and after daylight he had re-traced his steps, which had taken him across the bayou and Little River, but he hadn't been able to find it, and so he had come to confess his fault. I felt sorry for the poor thing, naturally and I thought up a lie slap off and asked him if he would help me in carrying it out, for, as I explained, I would write a letter to the congregation, thanking them for their "pronouncement" and assuring them that their message was vastly appreciated. The tears stopped flowing and a big smile broke over his worried countenance. He thought that was wonderful, --and so I fell to on the old Underwood and knocked off quite a grandiloquent manifesto which I thought the somewhat pretentious preacher would relish unreeling before his flock on next Sunday, and so sent of this "messenger of the Godly", happy as a clam, with renewed promises that he would search diligently for the lost "pronouncement" and bring it slap back to me if he found it. I saw nothing more of him today, so I assume he had no luck.

Blythe brought some people this afternoon, - the Graftons from Oyster Bay, Long Island. She also brought me a bottle of Taylor's port and a flock of chicken salade sandwiches for a midnight supper, and I shall make the most of them. Grandpa would love what I am going to hand out to Die Frau about the same time, for Grandpa loved wild duck, and Sister brought me a roasted one from Shreveport, which I immediately set aside for Die Frau, for I don't care for good wild duck, and although this one was presented as being extra special, I feel sure Die Frau will relish it more than I.

It was supper time by the time the Rand contingent had departed and Y. C. was waiting to run through the mail, which I did at break neck speed. I have but a vague notion as to what Daisey in the Dell had to say, but save for her reference to Weeks, I think there wasn't anything in particular, but I send it along regardless. It has been nice having this little chat, and now I must knock off a few letters of no import, and then have a page of the Fosdick item, a couple of sandwiches, and thence to bed.....

*Miss Myra'ly
le inou coffins
at Rosedale*

5292

Tuesday, February 5th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your up-town--down-town letter and may I thank you with all my heart for every line.

The nicest thing about kindred souls is that they can share each other's perspectives, whether sunlit or shadowed, and I thank you unendingly for your generosity in this respect.

It does seem like premonition, doesn't it, that I should have brought up the matter of the Francois Gassion item. And thanks to your account of how the merry-go-round turps, it is but natural that I should fully appreciate all the circumstances. As regards the Francois Gassion item, it takes considerable negotiating but I have a feeling that I shall eventually be successful. If so, - or even if not,-- I shall advise you, and in the event of success, I shall sit on the item until such a time as you may wish me to make disposition of it. I must say it sounds a little like a husband giving his non-smoking wife a box of cigars for Christmas, since, if successful in the undertaking already inaugurated, I shall end up by securing a gift from which I shall get all the enjoyment, --at least for a little while. But, were the situation reversed, I guess I would like the item even better, through association, were it eventually to arrive to or through that route.

I think it perfectly wonderful that you have been able to keep an even keel under the circumstances that must have been and still are continuing to swirl about you. Off hand, it would seem like a wonderful opportunity for a little returning visiting on kin folks down yonder, but that isn't to be considered, of course. For all the g draw-backs, there may be one glimmer of silver lining in the fact that so much plunder about ought to supply a perfect alibi for discouraging reverse visitors from down yonder all from the flock of educational institutions they represent closer to home.

And how sweet of you to mention the matter of the birthdays. How sweet of you and how exactly like you. These little celebrations have really represented more than you can ever imagine, - or rather and more precisely, you are the only one in the world who can possibly realize how much they have meant. It goes without saying, of course, that it is my most sincere wish that you decline

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attendance on the birthday parties whenever that seems wise, and the "children" will go right on growing in the mean time, and whenever we get ready to push further delights in that department, it can be as readily resumed one year as the next.

I laughed at your comparison of yourself with the old hen sitting on too many eggs, and I need scarcely repeat if the nest ever gets over-crowded, you will roll just as many as you please in this direction for safe keeping.

I was vastly depressed tonight when I discovered that during the absence of the head carpenter, a flock of no-account field hands had been turned loose on Yucca, and what they didn't do and left undone was monumental, ending up the day by filling in all the excavations and carefully replacing the brick pavement, which long before dawn on the morrow I shall tear up before any of them are a-stir. The head carpenter is sick with influenza and will probably be out of circumscription for at least a week. I am hoping I can hold everything in the unskilled labor department until he returns. If not I shall find myself just about where I was before I inaugurated this business, --and the Blessed Martin will continue to grace my bath for at least another fortnight.

You will enjoy the Devereux letter, for Miss Myra always seems to have something interesting to tell. Curiously enough she touches on iron coffins about which I have done considerable research, and more remarkable, she mentions one at Rosedale without ever dreaming that Rosedale is the new name of the former Shadey Grove plantation of Isaac Erwin, -- and that the iron coffin is none other than Marshall pass-along particular to Miss Myra so she can bounce it in the direction of the Merrills, and they will probably be slap happy to add some details to their puzzling coffins.

I wonder if you had the good fortune to hear the Lunts on Sunday night doing the Barry thing, "The Old Lady Shows Her Medals". I was glad I stumble on to it before "curtain time" and so could enjoy it throughout. I recall the movie version in which Gary Cooper played the soldier's part and liked the show ever so much. If memory serves, I reckon we may have spoken of it at the time it was released. I recall the ancient char women in the piece all of whom were splendid.

And may I thank you for sending along so promptly the stickers for which I had asked. A billion other things to talk about but they must wait. Again my thanks for your own good self

Steve 2/4/52
5294

Wednesday, February 6th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Curious, in this day of instantaneous news transmission, how many hours sometimes elapse between the airing of the event and the moment I stumble over it. I think I have mentioned how in Matchez on December 7th, 1941, I blissfully moved through more than half a day without hearing anything about the doings at Pearl Harbor.

Today England's king had been dead for ever so long before someone remarked about Britain's new Queen, and I was astonished.

I missed the Lowell Thomas broadcast tonight but did catch up with Edward R. Morrow but as he did not mention at what hour this morning the news was released, I still don't know at what hour the announcement was released, but I assume it may have been around 7 or 8 o'clock this morning.

I heard a 2 a.m. broadcast of news but there was nothing of much moment in that one, and nothing out of London. At 5:30 I be-stirred myself and spent the succeeding 4 or 5 hours tearing up the bricks on the back gallery, taking up the floor of the chapel, and digging like a beaver which accounts for my failure to keep up with current events. I was frankly astonished to find those no account workers yesterday had buried the sills supporting the Chapel and along the gallery up to the windows of my boudoir under a foot of damp earth, and in the Chapel, had nailed down the flooring slap on top of the earth, and bricked over the section of the gallery where the sill ran. It doesn't take much imagination to guess about how long a wood sill, supporting the vast weight of Yucca, might be expected to last, lying buried in damp soil. I contacted J. H. at 6:30, told him the results of yesterday's labor were unsatisfactory and that I hoped the proper supervisor would be making around soon. He said it is difficult to anticipate when the man might get over his influenza and a desire for a vacation. I said I didn't mind waiting a week or a month or a year, in fact I preferred a tore up Chapel and gallery to a semblance of perfection that was so artificial that the seeds of destruction were germinating every day in the buried sills. And so tonight the sills are exposed to the circulation of air and can stay that way indefinitely so far as I am concerned. The combination of a firm foundation and a pleasant facade is much to be desired, but if one must do without both, I am

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I am glad to accept the firm foundation in contrast to the gloss of an unconvincing veneer, and in a way I am hoping it may be a while before the work is resumed, since every day of a disordered appearance means just that much more opportunity for the dampened sills to dry out.

Sometime last night Dr. Eleanor paid a professional call on Madam Regard who has spent a couple of days in bed. She has had a cold but is now up and around again. The lady doctor left some cold medicine for me, some kind of capsules, half red, half white, but what they are made of, I wouldn't know. I began taking them at 9 this morning and feel ever so much better tonight. The plantation negroes, if they have faith in a physician, are always saying: "He hage good medecine", --with much accent on the good part. I have always had faith in Dr. Eleanor's medicine, but I suspect the work-out I gave myself before dawn probably did as much as anything to get circulation going again. In sheer whimsy I struck a new note in poudoir decors by suspending a branl from the ceiling just above my armchair behind this desk where I am wont to park when operating the reading machine. It may turn out to be a temporary thing, -- and I may leave it as a permanent feature. I reckon you are acquainted with the word, "branl" which may or may not be the correct spelling of the thing which may or may not appear in English or American dictionaries. It is one of those contraptions about the shape of a big tortoise shell about 3 feet in length and 2 feet in width. I suppose it has been used for ages in lieu of a cradle, as a place of safe keeping for an infant. I remember that of Henry IV at the Chateau of Pau which, in reality, was a big tortoise shell. But the ante bellum Cane River ones were of lighter material, the frame being of light wood, -- a single elliptical piece of wood about the thickness of an average sized bamboo cane. A piece of lowells, semi-circular in shape, was fitted on to this frame, a hem like bit of sewing guaranteeing complete firmness, regardless of how heavy the baby might be. Over the lowells or Unaburg a semi-circular covering of the same material was draped, and the edges drawn neatly together by tape, -- cotton tape, 3 or 4 inches inside the frame, -- and withal beneath the side where the child is placed. Four cords tied to the frame and all of them, -- the cords, -- joined in a knot 3 or 4 feet above the contraption may be suspended from the ceiling where ever convenient. This of course has the advantage of getting the infant out from underfoot and as the thing will swing endless at a single gentle touch, may sooth the child into sleep or seasickness, I suppose. These items are still used in remote negro cabins, but many people, even Louisianans have never seen, -- hence this latest wrinkle....

"Pronouncement"
Dora 2/4
5296

Thursday, February 7th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Naturally, the "pronouncement" would have been more extensive as a document, but the enclosed note, sent in substitution of the lost document, is wonderfully illustrative, -- what with the big blot slap in the middle of the page. It almost seems to me I can hear the Madam chuckling and muttering:

"I declare, those niggers are sights."

The weather is cloudless and warming, after another heavy frost last night, and summer is scheduled to be upon us again tomorrow.

I like the idea of lots of sunshine, and am "holding the thought" it may the sooner eradicate my cold.

Dr. Knipmeyer remarked he had had a note from the Wenks regarding some matter or other, and they said they would drop in to see him on Friday. Tomorrow, I take it, is going to be a day, but it certainly will not be a duplicate of last Friday, what with no dappled daxhund to serve as counter irritant.

I was disappointed to learn this evening that the one head carpenter on whom I had counted as being capable of repairing Yucca had been called away somewhere or other and wasn't likely to return to this area. But I am glad there is circulation of air about the sills of the house, and if the back gallery remains a pile of brick and a heap of earth, and the Chapel as void as a foresaken barn, I can afford to wait for an ultimate restoration. In the mean time, there is ample room in my bath for the Blessed Martin while the candlesticks and the stained glass can continue their "vacation" in the West room of Yucca.

Although I missed Lowell Thomas tonight, I did catch up with Edward R. Morrow, and was, of course, delighted to hear the excerpts from his radio speech of earlier today, concerning the late King and the first bow made by the new Queen. I suppose a transcription of the entire speech may be tracked down on a rebroadcast somewhere or other later this evening, and that will be a pleasure to hear.

3832

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A shimmering disk, all shiney and magenta in coloring, and withal transparent, came as quite a surprise to me as I opened a carton containing a Talking Book that quite an innovation. As you know, all records in the past, --like the usual commercial ones, have been opaque and black. Somehow this sudden explosion of color was like an unexpected rocket illuminating a midnight sky. If the world ever gets too dark in its outlook, I can always grab one of these disks and by merely glancing through it, instantly turned the appearance of things into a colorful spectacle, even though magenta is not my favorite shade.

The book is "France, a Short History" by Albert Guerard, or some such name, a W. W. Norton, 1946 publication. I sampled a couple of pages. The material seems interesting, the recording exceptionally fine, seemingly quite free from any mechanical buzz, murmur or scrape or scratch, with only the voice of the reader being present in this lovely platter of plastic.

In today's mail came a letter, the reading of which reminded me of the brick layer, vainly searching for employment, in a market that was crying for brick layers. On applying for a job, the contractor whose building projects were languishing for want of labor, welcomed him with open arms but told him he must submit his Union membership job before going to work, or the other laborers, all Union men, would lay down their trowels. Accordingly the man, happy at his good fortune in finding work, rushed off to the Union headquarters and asked for membership. The Union welcomed all new members but explained no card could be issued to anyone unemployed. He explained the assured job awaiting nothing but the Union membership card, but the card couldn't be issued until he was actually employed, -- and although I never heard the end of the tale, but I assume the brick layer simply starved to death.

I mentioned the other day, I think, that I contemplated doing something by way of a glass object suggestive of the African House. I inquired of Corning Glass who advised me they supplied glass to manufacturers only, and that said manufacturers created the desired finished products. And they kindly recommended a concern, -- one of their customers, in Indiana. I communicated with the latter whereupon they responded they would be glad to put on the finishing touches to a y object I had in mind but the Corning Glass Company would have to do the manufacturing.

Thus, so far as that first sally goes in this particular line, I find myself "up a tree" as it were.

Well, so things turn. M

Natchez pilgrimage
folder
5298

Friday, February 8th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I pause to knock wood, -- 8 o'clock and not a Wenk in sight: I'm wondering if it is possible they decided to camp in their fine mansion in Cloutierville and snub us, -- I hope.

And it is pleasant to report that I seem to have glimpsed the "corner" in the health department, for I get the impression I am about to perk up.

There was ample sunshine all over the place today, and the radio predicted high temperatures, but a cool breeze made a light jacket feel good. I busied myself behind hedges most of the day, and so didn't mind the breeze.

I was glad Mr. Morrow gave a recording tonight of the Manifesto, issued by the British Privy Council, proclaiming Elizabeth Queen. I suppose the original broadcast, -- I believe he said as much, took place on a balcony of St. James' Palace this morning, Feb. 8th. I was accordingly impressed when the official's words which were quite distinct, gave the date as February 6th, -- "this February 6th," I believe was the way it was stated. This must represent a bit of setting the clock back business, which both Britains and Americans seem to like to indulge in now and then. After all, if memory serves, it seems to me Congress has a way of stopping the clock at noon when a session, slated for termination at that point, exceeds the limit. That the King died on the 6th may be the reason for dating the ascension of the new sovereign on the same date, although on the 6th she was on another continent and wasn't sworn in until the 8th. Surely none of this is of the slightest importance, but I, who am not much of a stickler on dates, was impressed by the discrepancy.

I saw Celeste for a moment this morning. She seems to be in a happy frame of mind, the more so, perhaps, because one of her nephew's friends and Joe regard himself, were up from New Iberia for the night and will remain until the morrow, -- some school doings at the college, I believe.

5299

8852

1952, February 10th, 1952

I thought it just as well not to ask about what plans the ladies have for the week end. Celeste told me she was leaving in the morning to spend Saturday and Sunday in Mansura where a niece is getting married. Madam Regard, now up and about, told me yesterday she wasn't going if she didn't feel much better. I'm wondering where, if any, la Montespan comes in under the circumstances, and the more so because of the probability that the Wenks might be all over the place on the morrow. It would seem I am not the only one who is annoyed by such uncertainties.

The Gueard (?) "Short History of France" seems to be as excellent a book of its type as I have run across. The author writes with profundity, clarity and wit, - all rare qualities and especially among historians. I am skimmed through but a few pages and still twenty or thirty thousand years before recorded history, and so am willing to take the man's word for anything he has to say, since I don't pass for knowing anything about pre-historic history. I hope I may get a break over the week-end so that I can get as far as Catherine de Medici, at least or I might even be satisfied if I could catch up with Francois I, for things might become a bit recognizable by that late date. It goes without saying, however, that I am frankly impatient to crack open the 17th and 18th centuries, and I feel awfully noble to have thus far resisted the temptation to kangaroo through the earlier chapters.

The annual miracle of Spring becomes more and more evident in the ranks of the trees named in honor of Badin Soulange, for the magnolias that were first in the flower parade are now replacing the pinks and purples with a tender green of new blown leaves, 2 or 3 inches in length. I don't remember having seen such an opulence of greenery so early in the year and I can only piously express the hope that these trees know perfectly well what they are up to, --although I doubt if they do. But there is something altogether delightful in all this assortment of green shadings on every hand, but getting a very clear picture of all these pre-scheduled appearances, and somehow or other there is something about it all that is as difficult to get clear in one's mind as comprehending the finer points in a picture of a white swan eating marshmallows in a snow storm.

Over this week end, I shall be "holding the thought" that a measure of peace and elbow room may be yours and that you may be able to do lots of just plain nothing.....

1062

de Stern 2/7
Robina 2/8 5300

Sunday, February 10th, 1952.

Memorandum: I wish you may have had a measure of the unexpected

quiet that obtained in this area over the week end.

Although the Shreveport contingent descended on Cloutierville, they never did show up at this bend of the river, --and may that custom, having once inaugurated itself, go right on functioning for ever.

I had expected the widow of the banker, Pierson, this afternoon, but although that lady couldn't make it, her son, who stepped into papa's shoes as President of the Natchitoches institution came in her place, bearing with him an angel food cake from his mama, and a mighty fine cake it is.

Before the Pierson faction had departed, an Arkansas posse, unannounced, put in an appearance, and I put down my foot. Ben came over just after the Piersons had left, but our little chat was interrupted by the arrival of Dr. Fletcher of Southwestern who brought several savants with him. We talked everything from national politics to the latest wrinkle in botany, and as two of the gentlemen in the Fletcher party were experts in the horticultural field, I was glad to be able to give them some cuttings from plants with which they were unacquainted.

And after they had finally departed, there were other people, - a flock of biddies from heaven knows where, but to them I said No, and finally, as night was coming down, I got around to read a page or two from the Gueard book.

Albert Gueard, so far as the 17th century goes, is definite on the St. Simon level rather than the Voltaire. If memory serves me correctly, it was Voltaire who said that Louis XIV had enough stuff about him to make 4 kings and an honest man, while St. Simon, who never understood his own age, though Quatorzemighty muddle headed, Gueard, for no apparent reason, gives Quatorze the briefest brush off, and like St. Simon, finds the Sun King hopelessly bourgeois because he selected

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brains like those of Colbert, to administer his Government. Oddly enough, Napoleon 3rd gets much more space than Quatorze, and somehow this seems doubly puzzling, since the Second Empire gets quite a lot of space for civic improvements, whereas, I think, the improvements instituted by Quatorze tremendously surpassed anything the third Napoleon had to offer. It must be the fashion to disdain the 17th century, for I cannot believe that a person of Gueard's obvious erudition could be unmindful of the mighty twist European civilization took as a result of Quatorze having lived.

He doesn't do much about the 18th century either, although he does state that the 1750's were perhaps one of the best decades people not only of France but the world ever knew, and that Mme. de Pompadour was one of the most intelligent women of just that stage of the world's development. It isn't important, but it is interesting that Gueard remarks that the Arts flourished under Mme. de Pompadour who was assisted by the Marquis de Marigny. He doesn't mention that Marigny was Mme. de Pompadour's brother; and, of course, owed his situation to her.

Still, it is a good book, and exceedingly happily phrased, and while I think the author has utterly failed to appreciate the remarkable attributes of the 17th century, still he must be congratulated for his paragraphs on other centuries.

It is so warm tonight and the moon so wonderfully bright, I couldn't resist the temptation to arrange a little musicale on the rails of the back gallery where, in spite of the heaps of bricks, earth and timbers, I rigged up a comfortable "lolling" chair and a fine assortment of favorite records from Tchaikovsky to Caballero and back again, with only St. Giggin, the Frau and me to hold down our accustomed places.

Among our feathered friends there seems to be a step up in domestic activities. In the old peck at the corner of the fence beyond the front gallery a pair of red-headed woodpeckers are drilling away mightily, and somehow finding time to talk while they work, -- an accomplishment that never fails to elicit my admiration. I have always felt that if old Bayer could only once sell a woodpecker on the idea of asperin, Bayer stocks ought to soar wonderfully, for surely at the end of a busy day of hammering with his beak, that particular bird is bound to have a ripping headache, don't you think so. Locally, -- and I'm always delighted to hear it, the native population invariably call those birds "peckerwoods".....

Caroline Damon 2/8
5302

Monday, February 11th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your sweet letter of Wednesday in today's post. It was so kind of you to write such words of solace after all the excitement I reported in my Memo of a week ago. I am still so entranced to have escaped all that doings this week. I reckon they must have set up temporary camping facilities in their Cloutierville mansion, and let's hope they continue camping there on week ends.

I have been holding the thought all week end that you, too, may have had a break. How regenerating it is to snatch off a breathing spell now and then and in view of your heavy round-the-clock program, it is to be hoped you are doubly blessed with every advent of Saturday and Sunday.

The enclosure isn't much, but I send it along regardless, and I know you will smile, as did I, at the pattern used by the writer who must have used about the same stencil employed in communicating with "obina."

I am impressed by your report concerning the hour at which the news of King George's death reached you, since you hadn't as yet received my observations on my own ignorance for so many hours after the news was aired. As I understand it, the period of official mourning will last 4 months, but I haven't chanced to hear if any tentative date has been set for the coronation. I suppose there will be no attempt to engineer it this Spring, and yet Spring or Summer seems to be the best time for such pageantry, and waiting a year hence for such festivities seems a little long. But I should imagine, in view of dollar shortages, it might be well worth while to stage the services at such a time as would be convenient for people the world over to attend, and I reckon twice as many people from other lands would attend if the doings were planned almost any other time than Winter. I am so glad that Mr. Churchill happens to be in the saddle during this change of reigns, for he will undoubtedly give a note calculated to produce a maximum of effect, and somehow infuse an authenticity into the business that no other politician could hope to achieve. It must be admitted, no matter what else happens, that Elizabeth is fortunate in taking up her septor at a time when such a sympathetic Prime Minister is in power.

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I finished the Gueard book, - "France, a Short History," and found it good. I am still puzzled by the casual brush-off given the 17th century, but other sections are handles so well I can like them, and looks elsewhere for the "missing 17th".

Because Guerard has a more perfect appreciation of real values than do many a writer of history, for that very reason, I suppose, I am surprised he didn't make more of so many superlative values as enunciated by Quatorze. For a man who, after 300 years, is generally cited as the ultimate of autocrats, --that such a man could have placed such store on good manners; that a man who, as he himself declared, wasted too much money on military glory, that such a man brought "la vie delicieuse" to its highest level; that a man, swamped by endless details of government and family could still find time to bring order out of chaos and to make the most out of the materials at hand, that these and a hundred other positive virtues should have been his, --such circumstances I think are imperative to be enumerated in any sketch, no matter how brief, of a history of France. For as the author points out, there is no such thing as the French race, --it is simply a fusion of endless peoples from every old direction, and if the head of such a conglomeration of peoples during the longest reign in history could offer so many inspiring ways of formulating a pattern of life that would, if followed, lend emphasis to the best in every succeeding generation, then surely that man and some of his ideas should be worthy of reiteration.

On the plantation, like so many other places in the country, colds in various forms are the order of the day. Two of the most stalwart gentlemen, - one of strapping youth of 20 and the other a husky man of 40, are flattened out by pneumonia. Everyone is coughing and nearly everyone complaining of his "miserie". There is a novel way the pneumonia sufferers are receiving medical attention, for at 2 or 3 day intervals, the patients are bundled off to tow to consult a physician. This merely serves to remind me of how old fashioned I am, for in my day pneumonia victims were kept in bed and the doctors came to see them. But now-a-days, the patient goes to see the doctor, and although I haven't heard what treatment is given, I suppose one or the other of the miracle drugs is poured into the persons throat or blood stream, and the patient, I hope, recovers.

A heavy rain has been falling for the past half hour and I am about to make a little tour to see if all the ditches newly cut to drain off water and keep it from going under Yucca is or are functioning properly. The water gates of Cane River have been closed and tonight's shower should do much to restore the former level. So much to be done and so much zest to do it.....

5304

Tuesday, Feb. 12th, 1952.

Mr. Hadden Carter
Mr. Moore's
Memorandum:

I reckon it's Lincoln's Birthday in most places in the United States, but I saw nothing suggesting any such holiday in these parts, although in town I suppose the banks may have been closed.

Last night's rain turned out quite a copious business, with about 3 and a half inches falling within a couple of hours. A little to the Northwest, according to the 6 o'clock weather report this morning, it rained 5 and three quarter inches which must have helped out depleted cisterns in that area considerably.

Because I was curious to find out if the water was going to run into the excavations beneath Yucca, I decided I would read a bit before calling it a day, and ended up by sticking to my book longer than I had intended. I am sampling a thing called "The Plymouth Adventure" by Earnest Gebhart, or some such name. It's supposed to be a serious study, present in novel form, of the personalities and circumstances attending upon the establishment of Plymouth colony, and begins with the sailing of the Mayflower from Southampton in early August of 1620. It's a slow moving business, as it probably should be, but the wealth of detail offers an interesting mosaic of the little undertaking that loomed so large in later years on the pages of the history books. I reckon I may never finish the tale if something more engaging comes to hand, but in the absence of anything better, this item serves very nicely.

Following last night's rain, today dawn fair and warm, and new leaves began unfolding in every direction I am particularly thankful for the high thermometer, however, because of the vast success I have been having with my anti-rodent campaign, for apparently more than one four legged beast has folded up its beard either under the house or, in one or two instances somewhere within the walls, and were it not possible to have all doors and windows wide open, the atmosphere would certainly be intolerable.

5305

A letter in today's post came from Judge Wilson of the Probate Court of Boston, Mass. The Judge referred to his visit here a week ago and says he would like to have the Lafayette apron before June 1st when he steps down as Imperial Potentate or whatever position he holds in the Masonic order. Those New Englanders certainly are direct and work with speed. I must drop him a note in a day or so, pointing out that we are inclined to move a bit more leisurely down this way. I can readily appreciate his desire to grab the apron forthwith but I must say his imagination appears faulty if he supposes we have been staggering around all these years just waiting for someone to come along to say they would take it.

Celeste reports a lovely wedding in South Louisiana and says she met some charming Natchez people whose names she couldn't recall although she did remember that they live somewhere in Raane's neighborhood. They said Mrs. Moore seems to be happy in her current library situation. I expect I shall be hearing from her sometime between now and Christmas making acknowledgement of receipt of the Melrose plate. By her failure to write, she again demonstrates how one lets opportunities slip by confining one's self to one letter a year, for with Rodding Carter scheduled to be a Melrose guest before long, the opportunity will be perfect for selling him the idea of his great opportunity to make the most of Adam Moore's articles for his Natchez Times, if only Adam Moore would let me know if she wants to contribute some more things to the press. From various hints made in the past, she has given me the impression she would welcome the opportunity to print at least one article a week. But, on the other hand, it is quite possible she can handle her relations with Mr. Carter to her complete satisfaction without me barging in to sell said Carter the idea of making the most of the wonderful opportunity he has to make a wonderful contribution of Natchez publishing history by publishing the Moore fruits of a lifetime of research.

Of the pleasanter sights at this bend of Cane River at the moment are the pear trees of Arenbourg, now in full blossom and forming a might pretty pagent of white against a background of unusually limpid green. It's a bit early, - under usual circumstances, for this flowering in mid February, but if the frost doesn't nip the equally early formation of the fruit, we ought to have quite a crop this year.....

Dma 21, 5306

Wednesday, February 13th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Full Spring and a full day which is just another way of saying I shall have scant difficulty in getting to sleep readily enough.

Mitchell, the axe, spent the morning with me at Arenbourg, cutting a few trees but concentrating mostly on trimming crepe myrtles, turning pecaness and so on. February is usually the ideal time for trimming crepe myrtles but it is almost too late to do so this year, what with Spring seemingly already upon us.

The afternoon at Melrose was hurly-burly enough. Andy gave me a hand at moving a lot of trash around, including the transfer of a heap of stuff from Ucca to the upper floor of the African House. One doesn't have to exert much energy these days before water starts trickling, and I tried to maintain a slow motion progress, but without much success. I am glad to report we fished out three large rats that had passed out under the West room, thanks to the liquid poison recently set out for precisely that purpose, and thanks to the burial that ensued, the local atmosphere improved exceedingly.

Little King's twin broth, James, known as Big Six, dropped in to say howdy. I hadn't seen him in several years, -- he has been living in Los Angeles, and I scarcely recognized him. His uncle, Cy, passed this way before Six left. It was Cy over whom Little King wept that time he belatedly remember, after Cy had departed from the pasture baseball game, that all the time he had been carrying a butcher knife about his person, -- Little King, - and sobbed bitterly because he had forgotten to use it on Cy.

Sam Peace came by, asking if he might have a spot of wine, for someone has told Sam that wine makes blood fast, and what with his wife having carved himso generously during the past few months, Sam gives every indication of needing something more like a transfusion than a glass of wine.

Y. C. came to run through the mail, and as he left, Beau

3032

5307

Mack, his papa, arrived to cut my perruque. Tom ambled in probably because he heard giggling on the gallery, and Junior Sugabou passed this way to be taught a few more letters of the alphabet. An Ethiopian messenger from the store announced that pilgrims were awaiting me at the front gate, and it turned out to be a charming couple from Mobile to whom I gave a very brief but pleasant tour.

All this time trees were being trimmed and several tuck loads of branches were being hauled out, and as I noted all the "scuffling" I thought of something Helen Baldwin once said:

"I have the strangest impression of Melrose whenever I think of how F. keeps the flowers going, for every time I glance in any direction in the gardens, I see evidence of the presence of no human being, and yet the next time I glance in the same direction, there is every evidence that a heap of things have been altered, and yet for the life of me, I can't figure out how and when it has been done."

I know just how Helen felt, for I had precisely the same sensation this afternoon, and yet there was a young mountain of trash that had been rounded up, so, in spite of all the hurly-burly, I guess it wasn't all dwaddle, --and besides I feel pleasantly tired tonight.

The B. Gebler, Plymouth Adventure, introduces an interesting note about the pre-founding chicanery that went on prior to the sailing of the Mayflower from Europe. As is well known, the Virginia Company, made up of London merchants and speculators, had never succeeded in getting a colony established permanently in America. Their grant included the land from the Carolinas, or Florida, I suppose, to the 41st parallel, --which they figured was at "Hudson's River", which, actually, I believe is the 42nd parallel. Another company, having the grant to all lands above the "Hudson's River" had been equally unsuccessful in establishing a permanent colony. A manager of the Virginia Company organizing the Mayflower crowd for the Virginia Company, bought depressed shares of the Northern Company at give away prices, and then bribed the Captain (Jones) of the Mayflower to dump his passengers not on Virginia lands but up North of "Hudson's River", so that if the colony succeeded the profits would all go to the Northern Company of which the agent held ample shares, and as the venture cost the Northern Company nothing, the profits would be tremendous. It seems the profit motive was a recognized impulse in those days, too.....

Sister 211
Robina 211
5308

Thursday, February 14th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I hope the two enclosures travel side by side without getting into each other's hair.

I guess I should have preserved the envelope containing the hand written letter. It bore the name of Froncior Migion, and I must say the second name is different from the former Meinor. It's all so fearful and wonderful.

I returned a letter, penned by some Natchez bag to the Shreveport one, sending the answer out this afternoon so I might hope to stop the Sunday visitation by having the letter delivered on the morrow in Shreveport. In the Natchez letter was no end of gossip about a dozen people of whom I never heard, although a couple of names were familiar, --Mrs. Kelly of Melrose who has been wintering, --or should one say summering in Brazil and is returning just before the March 1st opening of Pilgrimage. The other reference was to Ferriday Byrnes, said to have been in bed, drunk, and under the doctor's care for the past three weeks. That must have been a dull three weeks for the physician. It was further said that Roane looks like a wreck, and that I can well imagine, what with such goings on.

The post script of the other enclosure interests me in that it seems to indicate Robina is on the Whitaker Chambers side of the Hiss business. I chanced to hear the last of the Chambers' business on unday night and found it dramatic. But I have always been inclined to think Alger Hiss is alright and so I cannot get much enthusiasm fired up for the Reverend Chambers who, to my way of thinking, is a dreadful bag on several counts. I put Senator McCarthy and Whitaker Chambers in the same category and if somebody would chunk their two heads together, I shouldn't mind at all.

Whoever heard of sending anybody to jail on grounds that somebody expressed the opinion that some note or other had been written on a typewriter that had belonged to the man accused by that big pumpkin number. It all seemed so outlandish at the time and no matter what Mr. Chambers

5309

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writes for The Post or intones over the National Broadcasting net work, he is still a bag and I d n't need any of his pumpkins filled with funny notes on anybody's typewriter to convince me.

The State Department built up under F. D. R. was a good organization, I believe, and I think it high time the cheap politicians be restrained from throwing mud pies in every direction I hopes to enhance their own rabble rousing propensities, --and vote getting, I suppose, - by trying to discredit what was probably about as fine a department of Foreign Affaires as could be found the world over.

I guess I aired my views on old Chambers sufficiently for this sitting. I believe Robina has long read The Shreveport Times which occupies a bias somewhere between the Herald-Tribune and old McCormick's Chicago Tribune, and as it has always been anti-Roosevelt, it probably has likewise been anti-everything having to do with the Administration, and it is possible Robina inclines to sympathize with the policy of the paper, although I'm inclined to think she has been rather more influenced by its editorials and news slants, some of which have out-Pegler-ed Pegler, if, indeed, such a thing were possible.

Plantation Among today's callers from the ranks of plantation people were two or three asking me to exert my persuasive powers on the Welfare Department. It seems as though there is one such appeal every week, and sometimes several. The more I contemplate the operation of the Welfare organization, the more I marvel it runs as well as it does. One of today's visitors was Mary Sauerwell, one time Melrose cook. She presently occupies the little house at the spillway where the Dark Duke lived, --the latter now occupying Clemence's house. Mary has been drawing a Welfare check for some years, perhaps a little on her own account but the major portion on account of her minor daughter. She explained to me she was "worried" because she hadn't been receiving her check for two or three months and thinks the Department has forgotten her. In such cases one usually hears but part of the evidence, as turned out to be the situation in the present go-round. I telephoned the Department to inquire if the Mary Sauerwell checks had been returned to the office uncashed. I learned that no checks had been sent out during the past 90 days, following knowledge from the Vital Statistics Bureau that the minor daughter of Mary Sauerwell had married 18 months ago and the mother had not informed the office of her daughter's new status but had continued receiving and cashing the checks intended primarily for the support of her daughter. Perhaps the new husband needed a little extra spending money, too. Now the question arises as to how M

Roane 2/11/52
5310

Friday, February 15th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Roane always writes such pleasant letters, it seems a great pity she doesn't take pen in hand more frequently. You will enjoy the enclosure, even though it covers no salient news items.

As for the clipping, I don't know from what Louisiana paper it was clipped. Madam Regard gave it to me this morning. I suppose the building referred to may be in Shreveport, although it seems to me the name by which the Fine Arts Building is known there is slightly different from that appearing in the clipping.

Celeste mentioned the Holiday article about Louisiana. Perhaps one of the most surprising things about the article is one of the pictures, --that of Parlange, for I believe the descriptive material beneath the photograph refers to Mr. and Mrs. Walter Parlange as being in the picture. Oddly enough this is the only instance anyone I know has ever seen the likeness of Walter Parlange. People living all their lives in New Roads have never seen him and none of my friends who drop by Parlange often have ever encountered him. Well do I remember Paula telling me when I have dropped in to see her that "you must have a chat with Walter.....I don't know where he can be.....I thought he was about but he must have gone out somewhere but perhaps he will be here the next time you pass this way....."

Such is the standard phrase used on everyone, and it does seem almost unbelievable after all these years that Mr. Parlange should have suddenly come into focus, -- and in a publication that enjoys such wide circulation.

I am hoping I may stumble across a good London broadcast of King George's funeral somewhere among the ether waves tonight, although the static is so constant thus far that nothing comes through very distinctly. I heard

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0180

a short London description early this morning of the doings but it was too brief to be interesting. The prize specimen of over simplification in reference to St. George's Chapel at Windsor came over the Columbia system early this evening when a news caster mentioned in a five minute world news round up that that

"London: - The remains of the late King George of England were today laid to rest in the burial house at Windsor Castle."

Imagine, --burial house.

I did a bit of laughing in my beard today when, at long last, Celeste finally got her lamps rigged up in front of her house. She had the lamp at my side gate copied for lights in front of her house. The man who did the job of reproduction didn't know much about his business, and not only did he ruin my lamp completely but he somehow succeeded in making the two he made for her look like saw off peanuts or some such. I moved another lantern from elsewhere in the garden and place it on the gate post where the former had been. As for Celeste's, she had to wait a long time to get her properly placed. I think the cypress posts she used turned out a little large, tending ~~xxx~~ to make the "sawed off peanuts" look even smaller. Then there was much fretting and fuming as to whether the posts should be creosoted or painted, and so both was done, - the lower part in the ground creosoted, the balance above ground painted. Thank heaven I had nothing to do with selecting the shade, for I viewed the first coat just at first dark, and found it repulsive, --sort of a Paris green, the like of which I have never seen in the leaves of anything growing in the garden, unless perhaps lettuce or poppies. Now the "sawed off peanuts" look as though they had just about reached the vanishing-point for no one will ever see the lamp but merely the post on which each stands. The lady had absented herself in something of annoyed despair, heading for a party in town, I suppose, at a little ~~xx~~ while before the posts were to be treated, and -- while I am genuinely sorry for her at the poor way the whole thing turned out, I can't help but smiling to myself at the way the whole thing flopped from start to finish, which somehow has something of that same unexpected element of Ida Mazurette not content with breaking one leg but breaking the other half an hour later.

The weather is cool, --40 tonight, a high of 50 promised for tomorrow. This will hold up Spring a little, I hope....

Madame Marnie 2/18

5312

Sunday, February 17th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Much star dust in the heavens tonight, following a day of cloudless skies but a coolish breeze, but the sunshine took the edge off the clammy nature of yesterday's low hanging mists. Fortunately, we escaped a frost and the Arenbourg pear trees are really quite a glory.

But before proceeding further, I should perhaps explain that the absence of lights makes the world seem a little more hazey than usual and the lack of ordinary balance in the typing is not due to any physical slump, for the flu seems on the way out, but merely because the Valley Electric at this bend of the river isn't functioning.

I broke bread with Celeste and Madam Regard along about 7 o'clock, ever one else having put themselves in the big road. A car drove into Celeste's yard, the driver announcing that the overseer's house was on fire. We immediately rang the plantation bell, hard by the store and in a twinkling dozens of people of color sprang up from out of the ground, it seemed.

I went down the road, --you may recall that Mr. Earnest's house was the first one down the road, after passing the gardens. I thought someone should look after Mr. Earnest, who usually inclines toward uncertain balance, especially on Sundays. As I approached, the house was already caving in, sending up huge sheets of flame. Luckily there was little stir of air, save for a gentle breeze from the South, carrying the sparks into the newly ploughed cotton fields. The situation might have present a distinct problem had yesterday's East wind been blowing.

Some mulattoes had already put Mr. Earnest in their truck and Peter, who had led Mr. Earnest out of his house, had told me in the road that his face had been burned somewhat, and so I recommended they drive Mr. Earnest to town where his burns could be attended to at the hospital, after which, if not serious, he might stay with a daughter living in town.

I suppose the wires, burned away from the house, caused the short circuit for the entire system but what is such a slight inconvenience in face of the loss poor Mr. Earnest sustains.

5182

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There is, to quote the old adage, "no great loss without some small gain", and as I-cast about looking for the latter in the present instance, I come to the conclusion that the destruction of one dwelling will eventuate in the call for bigger and better carpenters to re-build, and perhaps in the calling a response will be made in such force as will give new impetus to the foundation work, now at a standstill, on Yucca. In the mean time, the air is circulating merrily beneath the ancient structure, and the drying process, following the cloudburst of a week or two back will tend to remedy.

In the entertainment field, I find this advantage in having the electricity temporarily cut. With election and the selection of a new Governor on the docket for Tuesday, the local radio stations are clogged with orators, extolling the virtues of the two remaining candidates in the field, --Kannon and Spath, and while utter silence is a pretty high price to pay for shutting off the politicians, still the silence is golden, so far as Louisiana stations go. Oddly enough, the two remaining contestants in the Governor's race seem to be rather above the average in State politics, and about the only charge against Spath is the fact that he is backed by the Long machine. But at the moment it would appear that Kannon is likely to be the lucky man, and if so, the Longs are headed for eclipse, --but, one may be sure, for only an odd interim. Joe Henry used to know Kannon, -- perhaps they were class mates in college, or some such, and Joe always admired the man, who doesn't seem more tangled up with ominous backers than all such candidates seem bound to be. At present it would appear that about a million and a half dollars are required to put on a campaign adequate to give a man a chance to convince the voters. Accordingly it is obvious that any body who aspires to the Governor's chair must either be prepared to spend a fortune of his own or sizeable hunks of cash belonging to others, and I suppose the miracle is that all candidates aren't more encumbered with pre-election day promises to contributors than appears on the surface. It would be interesting to see a table detailing the costs, -- pre-election costs, of various offices, -- how much it cost to be Caesar, Pope, Holy Roman Emperor, --and contrast the same with some contemporary thing, --say, the Senatorial investiture of Robert Taft. But something tells me I have orated enough for this sitting, and as I want to strike out early for Arenbourg at dawn, I'll fold forthwith.....

Dora 2/11
Beth Deal 2/11
5314

Monday, February 18th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The weather is fine, the leaves unfolding and where ever I pass, the dirt is flying. My cold is practically gone, and my energy reviving.

The enclosure from Beth Deal, --or is it my imagination, --reminds me ever so much of Helen's style. This seems the more surprising, -- although is the explanation perhaps, since in appearance, there was something about her that brought Helen to mind. I hope I never see the two gals together, for that would probably shatter the illusion. But it is pleasant to know she is eventually planning to pass this way again and I shall drop her a line tonight, recommending the Kleisers in Orange, little Miss Alberta in New Orleans and a flock of folks in Natchez, some of whom she may or may not find to her liking.

I laughed to myself today when I was reminded of the cow who contributed the pail of milk for Sweet Charity's sake only to turn around and kick it on to the ground.

I be-stirred myself early, thinking to look up some things I might share with Mr. Earnest, what with everything he possessed, save what he had on his back, having gone up in flames yesterday. At mail time I found him at the store. It seems he was treated for his burns at the hospital and sent on his way, but he preferred not staying with his daughter in town, where he had dined Sunday noon, but instead returned to the Cane River country, spending the night with the mulattoes--the Kirklands living on this side of the spillway, -- just opposite the cabin of the Dark Duke. I asked Mr. Earnest to stroll over to Yucca with me where we packed up a stack of things and as all were new and some rather pretty, he seemed pleased and apparently he found the little money I handed him of use, too, but in typical Tobacco Road finesse, he explained

"I'm glad to have it is but you know our family isn't poor. My son-in-law makes more money in a day than you do in a month and he will probably send me plenty."

Bang went the pail, and I tried to keep a straight face.

And somehow I thought I could hear Lyle's voice echoing with the same words I have heard him use so often

5315

"If it's something about hill-billies you are going to tell me, well, don't, for I don't want to hear anything on that score at all."

The clipping enclosed in Dora's letter is probably old stuff for your bright eyes but the particulars are new to me, as I hadn't heard of the Diary before. I shall have to say No to Dora's offer to send me a copy of the Post, but it is being brought out in print. If the book reviews haven't already had a go at it, I suppose they will shortly, and it will be interesting to learn if it is well received. I take it, from past references to The Post, that Dora must keep abreast with that publication, but since he doesn't mention the Whitaker Chambers article, I take it he wasn't so impressed by it as was Robina.

I was amused by the biting satire, irony and sarcasm of Martin Aegronski the other morning when, in referring to the Chambers article, admonished his listeners that here, indeed, is a new pattern for modern youthful readers who want to follow in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents along lines laid down by the Alger books. As Mr. Aegronski put it, all one has to do to be an enormous success is merely to fashion one's life in the Chambers way, become a Soviet spy while in the service of one's American Government, sell as many documents as you can, and then, after the going gets tough, just confess publicly you have been a spy, accuse everyone else you can think of as still being in Soviet pay, and then after the Government of the U. S. has let you go Scott-free, and jailed others merely on your testimony, then you can get \$75,000.00 for an article in The Post, and live happily ever after close to earth and nature on your Maryland farm. I was itching to pass that along to Robina, but thought she might not appreciate the humor.

Minnesota and Michigan pilgrims today, and a pretty dull lot they were, although I must say that they demonstrate good judgement in being in Louisiana and not at home while the blizzards sweep across their native heath.

I continue The Plymouth Adventure but Mr. Gerbler, the author, seems to have become bogged down with love and sand on Cape Cod as many another individual between 1520 and 1952 has floundered likewise. I continue the narrative, however, in hopes of learning a few more facts about the Adventure, outside the realms of love and sand, but I do so merely because I don't chance to have any better fare at the moment.

I think so often of little Miss Lee these days and hold the thought on half a dozen fronts in her immediate

5316

re: Mr. Beaumont
Tuesday, February 19th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter of Wednesday, the 13th, in today's post. I reckon it may have dwaddled a little along the way, but a mail pouch only last week, intended for Melrose, went to Grand Bayou, where ever that may be, and perhaps the Wedne day item had an extra little ride along the way.

And how gay is the signature, and I could see the Valentine insignia so plainly, and I love it. How happy the whole thing from beginning to end made me.

And may I thank you for having been so thoughtful as to send along the poem and a transcription of the lines I sent along to you. I did not have a copy of the latter, but am glad to have the card carrying them, and I shall like them twice as much as before, knowing that you like them, too.

As for the other poem, on the pink slip, I have tucked it in the armoire until the morrow. My afternoon was quite hurly-burly, but I had a quiet sitting with Y. C. when it was time to read your letter. Just as we had finished the letter, and before getting to the poems, Don Worsley appeared, and so it struck me I should enjoy running through the balance of the enclosures more when having a moment of freedom and the assurance that no one was waiting for me.

And may I thank you for telling me la belle Beaumont's first name, which I did not know, and which I am delighted to become acquainted with at this late date. I must find out about her final date and resting place. I think I have never made a notation on that point, although you may run across some particulars about her in some of the Journal, although I am not certain that the section containing such data is included in the batch you have. It may have been along about 1942 that I did some research in the Woodville neighborhood under my own steam, and it seems to me I made quite endless notations along about that time, although I may not have separated them from the section of the Journal, lost in the high water of 194. I am sure, however, that I have mentioned to you before that Joe Kellogg of The Elms, in Watechez, is Madam Beaumont's son or rather grandson, although I doubt if the Kelloggs ever heard of Madam Beaumont, --just another case of Marie Therese, and the

5317

descendants not having the sense to recognize the greatest soul in their entire family tree. I think I mentioned, too, that I visited la Beaumont's home in Woodville, from which one may see the Court House clock, - the old jail where she was incarcerated and her upholstery shop in which her personality was a dominant factor, following her second marriage to the youthful upholsterer, - a youth of German extraction, if memory serves. It was wonderful to discover an ancient negro who had worked for Madam Beaumont and could lead me to many of the places associated with various episodes in her Woodville career, and when he wanted to lead me to see her house, I naturally didn't tell him I had already been there, as it gave him so much pleasure to re-live with an interested listener the good old days when he was a member of the household of the lady he admired so much.

A part of today's hurly-burly was due to the election which brought lots of colored people from the Little River and Red River sections to cast their ballots. In all truth, it must be admitted that most of these voters can neither read nor write, although some of them have learned to scrawl their names, even though they have no notion of what the actual letters are that they form by copying. As for the identity of any of the candidates, the names mean absolutely nothing to them, if they chanced to know the names printed on the ballots, but, of course, most of them can't recognize a single letter, so a long word like Spath or Kenno, wouldn't spell out anything for them. The point of the whole business is that they, for the most part, ask someone to help them, and they express the desire to vote the way Mr. J. A. wants to vote, and that is that. And thus we have the spectacle of the planters of the river bottoms at long last having an opportunity to balance off the hill billy vote of three quarters of a century, for during all that time, the white hill billies have been voting, but knowing no more about reading or the identity of the candidates than the negroes, - but by this current phase of democratic processes, the thing is at least coming a little better into balance. Don didn't have much to say about the lady doctor except that she is working ever so hard. I believe he is going to college on the G. I. bill, but I know not what he is studying, and I didn't ask, as I was trying to push. No one has seen Mr. Earnest's cat since the fire, but I reckon a cat would probably escape from a conflagration. Now if he should honor Die Frau and me, I think I shall invite him to remain. It was so good having your letter, and let us join in holding the t. ought to keep all flags flying.....

5318

Wednesday, February 20th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A delicious shower of an inch and a half or so at midnight, followed by an all blue and gold day, the whole of which I have spent at Arenbourg. I am tired tonight, with the type of fatigue that comes not with having a million people buzzing around but the variety resulting from diligent physical labor that somehow makes rest the sweeter, I suppose, because the brain has been befuddled by nothing but the casual contemplation of the doings of the plant world and just enough bodily activity to prevent one from thinking about or caring about everything else that swirls around in the complicate universe in which we dwell.

I did some radio listening last night and although a thunder storm, "hoovering" about somewhere in the neighborhood made reception rather poor, it was clear enough for me to catch up with Fibber and Molly, and just a touch of Louisiana gubernatorial campaign have an opportunity this week end to hear Joe Henrys delight that his old friend, Judge Kennon was the successful candidate, for I learned today that the Joe Henrys are coming over from Monroe, Texas this week end, and that the S. G. Henrys are coming up from Baton Rouge. I like Joe and Juanita and S. G. so much that I look forward with genuine pleasure to their advent. Then, too, since the Shreveport Department can't stand either of these branches of the family, we shall not have a visitation from that quarter, and that is something pleasant to look forward to, too.

Another mildly surprising bit of news came to me today when at 9 thing morning, I dropped by the store to telephone the Rev. David Coughlin to pass along the news about what Mrs. Brandon had to say in her last letter, -- about being acquainted with his aunt, now living in Atlanta. The Reverend's telephone chanced to be busy, and so I sat for a moment at the desk in the office, doddling and fiddling with the dial, while giving the Reverend an opportunity to break off his busy wire. Two or three people of color sat in the sun just outside the window, which was open. They couldn't see me, but I could hear them quite distinctly, and I pricked up my ears at this:

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5319

"there sure was a heap of excitement Sunday night when Mr. Earnest's house burned down. Mr. Francois came out of Miss Celeste's house and ran to ring the plantation bell, and right away afterward Miss Celeste followed him, and he fainted slap away in the road and she had to pick him up and drag him back to her house."

Now that was the purest bit of story telling, made up out of whole cloth, that I ever chanced to hear in so far as I myself figured in the fabrication. Naturally there wasn't a word of truth in it, and the guy who was spinning the yarn must have just felt like entertaining his listeners. Shortly afterward I tried the Coughlin number again and contacted the Reverend, and when I said hello, my voice, carrying not only to Nate itoches by wire, but through the open window just in front of me, impelled the story teller to fly as though shot out of a gun, and I giggled so heartily to myself, the Reverend must have thought I was gargling.

As I was leaving the office, I encountered the master carpenter who originally started tearing Yucca to pieces with a view to putting it back together again, but stopped at the start. He said he was recovered from his influenza and hoped to resume operations on Yucca on Monday, -- a bit of news that naturally enchanted me.

From news reports from Europe, I take it things are going by sixes and sevens in that quarter, and I doubt if a European Army is ever going to be formulated before there is, through compulsion, a United States of Europe along political lines. During a political year, every party makes such extravagant claims, one must discount all reports not only from the major political parties, but the factions therein as well, and so I suppose the current claims that Senator Taft just about has the nomination sewed up may be taken with a grain of salt. It occurs to me, however, that it would be an odd, -- probably an impossible twist, -- if the G. O. P. should in fact nominate Taft and the Democrats, by some remarkable bit of hand-springing, should nominate Eisenhower. I suppose, if such an unheard of thing were to happen, it would eventuate in a collapse of both parties, since the goose of the Republicans would be cooked and Eisenhower, when elected, might tend to ignore party lines completely, so that both groups, after four years of such a Presidency, would be but completely at sea.

And now I shall splash through a shower, collapse under the brail for half an hour and wind up the Plymouth Adventure and thence to sleep. It was so nice at Arenbourg, where I had Andy helping me all day, but it was Miss Lee who seemed to be the only spirit with whom I constantly communed.....

1382

Madame Chaco 2/19/52
5320

Thursday, February 21st, 1952.

Memorandum:

Another Spring day with ample doings all about, not to mention the usual Thursday morning visitation from the Knipmeyers and pilgrims from Rochester, N. Y., in the afternoon. But I managed to get in quite a few licks, both at Yucca and Arenbourg, and I think I shall do no mail tonight, but rather let the Reading Machine make a few go-rounds, since it didn't labor much last night and hasn't made a peep all day.

I am trying a new wrinkle in the crepe myrtle department, but shall have to wait a few years to see if it turns out successfully. There is nothing novel about, it (interruption) but I have never seen it tried, and so I shall have fun to see if any results are forth-coming. I planted a circle of crepe myrtles, -- ranging from 2 feet to 4 feet in height. The shortest ones are placed nearest the point from which the 5 or 6 foot circle will be most frequently seen, the larger ones gradually increasing in height until slap opposite and at the back of the circle, -- that is opposite the smaller ones at the front. As you know, crepe myrtles should be trimmed back every year, or perhaps every other year, and as this circle grows in height, I shall continue keeping the present shorter ones below those at the far side of the circle, so, if the thing works out as I envision it, there should be a wreath of flowers, seemingly set at about a 45 degree angle all during the 3 months of flowering each summer, with the whole circle being elevated a little more with each passing season, and with the expansion of the main stem of the tree increasing annually, the whole thing ought to be quite a flying disk by the time three or four years have leaped.

And if all the above sound just as clear as mud or definitely on the crack-post side, just dismiss it as unimportant, which, in reality it is, but I do like to share these little experiments with you regardless.

5321

Reverting to the Rochester pilgrims, both guests and host
underlined respective points when one of the guests said:

"There are Rochesters in 13 different States, but
our New York State one is the largest of all."

And the host countered with: "There are 13 Melorses in
the United States, but our Melrose, Louisiana is the
smallest."

Don't you think so.

A gentle rain has just started and I am enchanted, since
it comes at just the right moment, following much transplanting
of lilies and things today. The forecast is for cloudy and
warm weather on Saturday, which ought to give the newly set out
things an opportunity to get such a hold in their new situa-
tions that they will scarcely know they have been moved.

On Saturday we are scheduled to have some ladies from
Marksville, La., who are coming, I believe, to dine with
Celeste. I'm not sure if these are members of the garden club
or not, for the latter has been threatening for some time to
honor us. It just occurs to me that Celeste's birthday must
fall on Monday, Feb. 25th which, I suppose means a Monday
party, and what with the Conroe and Baton Rouge Henrys thrown in
for good measure over the week end, we ought to develop
an "all hands to the pump" business on the chicken salad
and sandwich front I have already ditched the couple of hints
that there will be after dark festivities across the fence and
again, as so often in the past, I count as among my major
blessings the custom I established long ago to close my
door on the social side as soon as the first veil of evening
flutters down.

From a South Louisiana pilgrim I learned today that Blythe's
sister, Willie Wynn White, is in the hospital with a banged up
ankle, --just that and no details. Perhaps this accounts
for the absence of the Bands from this area recently. I
learn from another source that Governor-elect Kennon will
appoint James Maclemore Highway Commissioner and that
the Highway Commissioner will be named heir apparent to
succeed Governor Kennon four years hence since in Louisiana
a Governor may not succeed himself. Thus are plotted the
schemes of mince and men, and how wonderful it must be to be
bitten by a political bug....

Colfax High School
5322

Friday, February 22nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

Last night's drizzle kept right on drizzling all day, and
although it prevented me from doing much outside work, I
did do a bit of whacking at the Arenbourg hedges. I like to
get them trimmed in February, for the new growth seems to
bush out so much fuller as the season advances.

It goes without saying that things transplanted yesterday,
thanks to the drizzle and continued cloudiness and mild
temperature, gives the impression that the things had always
been growing right where they yesterday suddenly found them-
selves.

The enclosure will receive an affirmative response, but
in so doing, I must formulate some policy for similar
requests which will undoubtedly be coming to hand with
ever increasing frequency as we jog along toward March, April
and May when the peak will be reached. At the moment, --and
I haven't taken time out to give the matter much thought, I am
inclined to think I shall say No to similar requests from
the Natchitoches area on the grounds that many of the
visitors somehow or other make a round during the year with
friends, and secondly because the value of the tour is
diluted by too large numbers coming at the same time and
that as the end of the educational season approaches, the tour
tends to be more of an excuse for an outing than anything
else. Personally, I'm all in favor of such outings, but
there are so many delightful rural spots in the environs
of Natchitoches, --the Grand Ecore bluffs, the national forests,
and so on, and, if bent on a frolic, the pilgrims could have
a lot more fun on a sylvan frolic than being herded about
ye olde plantation. Selfishly, too, I suspect I am influenced
by the fact that I begrudge the time and energy spent on
people who, if given a choice, would select something purely
rural without any suggestion of civilization mixed up in the
thing. I've about made up my mind that perhaps 4 or 5 out of 50
are likely to get something out of a tour, made cumbersome by
such a large group and anybody can impart more to 4 or 5 in
a group of that number than to 4 or 5 in a group of ten times
that size. Well, we shall eventually see.

5323

At supper I learned that Dr. Wenk telephoned this afternoon to inquire something about the week end from J. A., but as J. A. was in Alexandria, no plans were made, and the other party to the conversation, --perhaps Eugene or Ben, said nothing about the impending arrival of the other branches of the family. It out to be a bang up business if the Wenks blow in along about Sunday when their pet hates are assembled in force. It's so pleasant looking forward to Sunday afternoon when no matter what transpires, everyone will have gone his respective way.

I am still dithering about in the Plymouth Adventure, but will perhaps fold it up tonight. One thing I learned in the last page I read had to do with an interpreter. By some miracle, an Indian appeared one day when the colonists were busy trying to get some houses rigged up for habitation, -- I believe it was in February, following their November arrival, during no time of which had a contact been made with a red skin. And although this was the first permanent settlement established in continental United States, the killing thing about the encounter was the fact that the Indian rattled off some English. This made such an impression on me, and what with two interruptions since I began this letter, it is quite possible I have already remarked upon it, but I run the risk of repeating myself, so much do I want to pass along this curious piece of early Pilgrim luck, -- and heaven knows they didn't have much in any other respect. It seems that a sailing-vessel sometime years before 1620 had enticed a few Indians on board and then sailed slap to Spain with them, where they were sold into slavery, but in the case of one of them, a priest bought him or otherwise got him sent to England where he remained in some man's house for a year, after which he was sent on a sailing vessel to Newfoundland and thence found his way back to the country of the Massachusetts. His sudden advent among the Pilgrims enabled them to establish friendly relations with the neighboring Indians, --all members of the tribe of the interpreter having died, and so things got under way under happier auspices than could ever have been charted out by hard boiled planners of such an enterprise.

In view of the inclement weather, the plantation did not work today and this and that negro friend dropped by before day was done. The Dark Duke told me that the master carpenter, D. Ben Williams, employed to supervise Yucca reconstruction, had once been married to a sister of one of the lesser carpenters, and when D. Ben fell ill, it was the intention of the lesser Jack-leg to finish up the whole Yucca job with dispatch to do his former brother-in-law, subsequently estranged from his wife, out of local enterprises. Such skull duggery and such speed in trying to rush the business 2 or 3 weeks back. May next week open brighter....

5324

Sunday, February 24th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I have thought of old Lyme so often this week end, hoping is was experiencing a measure of the peace prevailing at this bend of the river.

It was among the quieter week ends I can remember, with a slow rain on Saturday discouraging pilgrims, which is always a good start for any week end in these parts. I was sorry the Joe Henrys couldn't make it, but I was glad to see the S. G.'s., who came after dark Saturday night and whom I did not see until this morning when the General came over to spend an hour or so with me.

The Wenks came for dinner and immediately afterward, everyone spattered in their respective directions.

The General leave Baton Rouge for Memphis tomorrow. He says S. G., Jr., is being discharged from the hospital where all that can be done for him has been done. A house has been found in Baton Rouge for the Juniors who will move there on Tuesday, and during the coming season both families will build homes on adjoining lots on the edge of the city.

There wasn't much news but everything went off pleasantly.

A side light on Spring was indicated by a news item the General gave me in saying they had received their first shipment of strawberries from Hammond, La., this past week, --about a month earlier than usual. That isn't exactly surprising news what with everything else being so far ahead of season.

You recently asked about the Francois Gassion item. I think the matter will be terminated successfully for our side. You asked about its shape, --it is round, and although I had thought of it as larger, it turns out to be just about twice the length of this envelope, as to diameter. I think I mentioned it has a tiny hole just off center which scarcely shows, and while I suppose it could easily be soldered from the back without being noticeable, still I rather like it as a reminder that it was once a thing that was probably in constant use.

5325

In the reading department, I did a bit of disk turning last night. For one thing, I finished the Gebler book, -- "Plymouth Adventure", and then grabbed up another carton, just coming to hand, and discovered that I was still in an adventurous vein, since the title of the new book, - probably old in publication by a year or two, was entitled "The Scholar Adventurers" by Richard Aldick, or some such. I am under the impression the latter may have appear serially in some such publication as The Post, but that is merely a guess. Be that as it may, I think, if you have not already explored its contents, you will find it altogether interesting as to subject matter, and withal well written. In the second chapter, devoted to the forgeries of first editions by T. J. Wise, I found much reference to and quotations from Fanny Ratchford, of the Wrenn Library, University of Texas, a lady who was want to come to Melrose in the old days, and one with whom I have had some correspondence prior to 1945, at about the time she was getting out a volume or two on the Wise forgeries, for the Wrenn Library had several of them, as Mr. Wise had acted as London agent for Wrenn and had palmed off several of his forgeries on said Wrenn, not to mention old Huntington and others.

Between coffee and desert at dinner, Celeste had whispered to me that the lady doctor had called to inquire if I would receive her and some friends this afternoon, and asked about the clearness of the coast. Celeste said she had told her she thought any time after three would be alright. It was. And at 3:30 Die Frau and I started to explore the front gardens a bit, when I encountered a flock of New Orleans people whom I turned back, saying the place was closed.

Dr. Eleanor and her friends arrived shortly thereafter, and I looked forward to getting caught up on a lot of conversation while the friends were exploring the place more or less on their own hook, but at the precise moment that presentations had been made and we were about to start out from Yucca, the lady doctor called my attention to figures on the front gallery. The figures were Dr. Rand and Blythe, who, by their presence, only went to prove that "it never rains but it pours".

But I was glad the medical department could have this contact, -- the first they had had since the dazhund the Rands had given me had passed to the Worsleys, and had subsequently gone on to its final reward. But I got scant opportunity to do much talking with anyone, what with the guests of the lady doctor to be looked after. But all in all, it has been a pleasant day, and I'm hoping you had one that was at least as peaceful, and by some miracle, one that afforded a little moment for your own relaxation.....

5326

Monday, February 25th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It's remarkable how lacking in cooperation is the weather when it comes to getting Yucca rigged up. Days have gone by without rain during the illness of the dusky master-builders, and although cloudy, there was no rain last night. But just about the time things got under way this morning, all hands to the pump, as it were, the rains came, knocking all operations out for today at least. It must be conceded, however, that they did get the thing jacked up 4 or 5 inches, and while that isn't all that is required by any means, it does represent a step in the right direction.

In today's post came a flock of short letters, which I ran through first, since I thought they might contain something of importance, but none of them did. There was a long one from Helen which I saved until the last, and my secretary got worn out before he reached the end of the first page, and so I have had to shelve that one for another sitting, --the letter not the secretary.

While it occurs to me, I'll toss in a couple of non-interesting things relative to the presence of the S. G.'s here yesterday. The General, for instance, told me everyone was enchanted with the plates, and that the Junior S. G.'s had accepted not only the plate I sent them but three of the other six which the seniors had ordered. It's nice to know the young ones like them.

The General also said he wanted to thank me for having taken such good care of the Colquettes, - his friends in Pan-Am Oil, who had written him of their visit and that they had especially liked the library. I liked the library part, but realized they weren't the type to know what the African section of the plantation was all about. In passing, I might remark that it was nice of them to write somebody, following their visit.

One further observation on the visit: - At dinner we sat around the table thus: - J. A. at the head, then the General, Mrs. General, one of the little Wenks, Sister, another little wenk, Dr. Wenk, Celeste and I. The General directed much conversation to J. A., Celeste and I, but not a word or a glance in the direction of the far end of the table.

5327

I continue reading a bit from "The Scholar Adventurers, or whatever the precise title is, and suddenly discover that I, myself, am almost as interested in how unrecorded and unexplained manias originate and get set in motion as are the scholars in their pursuit of genuine manuscripts. Here is a case in point: --

On Saturday morning at coffee, apropos of nothing in particular, Celeste said to me, as I was leaving, --trying to get out before her guests arrived from South Louisiana to spend a day at card playing or whatever: --

"There's just one thing I ask, --please don't die before I do."

I assumed she had in mind the impending visit of a flock of -enrys, and was implying that it was much easier sailing for her in realizing she had my moral support at all times, as she most certainly has in the unending uproar that Sister puts on.

But by chance on the afternoon of the same day, a servant confided in me that the question of where I would best like to be buried came up for discussion across the fence a couple of days ago. It just occurs to me all this business must have been hatched by my recent indisposition in the influenza department, and while it is perfectly true that I didn't feel too full of vim and vigor at the time, I doubt very much if I could have presented a picture of death astride a white horse.

What with Drs. Worsley and Rand being my guests on the following day, and what with their separate remark that they thought I appeared in the pink of condition, I gather the prospect of a burial doesn't seem so pressing to the profession, at least.

But I accommodated the original speculator as to my preference as a final resting place by indicating a pleasant spot, should I die on the plantation, said magical location being in front of the African house, about mid way between the two doors. I suppose that whimsy will vastly satisfy anybody who may be the happier in having settled in advance just where a person, should of body if not of mind, is ultimately to be planted.

What a hodge-podge of a Memo, and may I do better anon....

5328

Tuesday, February 26th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your two letters in one, together with the notes on the South Carolina number in today's post.

It goes without saying that I hope your cold and sore throat are all something of the past, but if they turn out to be the brand of influenza that seems to be so prevalent in this section, you probably will be bothered with same for quite a time. Do, I pray, go slow, and if you can't go slow, go as slow as you can, for cobs of rest will do more than almost anything outside of actual medical treatment, and I'm a little dubious about the latter in anything to do with a cold.

It's good to know you had the little in-door trip to the Cakskills and it is interesting to know that A.bera and Martha are still making a go of it, if that is what they want.

And I was delighted that you, too, heard the funeral broadcasts from London. I appreciated what you passed along regarding the present status of the various members of the family and their potention places in the line of succession if and when.....

I am glad, too, that you got a glimpse of things through the short film at the Embassy. According to reports, the atmosphere for film taking wasn't so good on the day of the funeral, but nevertheless by now I suppose the full film covering the event and perhaps other cogent subjects dovetailing the business must be available, and I am hoping you have the good luck to stumble over one or more of them.

What with tomorrow being Ash Wednesday, the whole neighborhood is in festive regalia today, especially among the younger fry, and my secretary tells me he would like me to attend a program and dance at the school, -- St. Mathew's, tonight. I declined with thanks but must confess I regret not seeing one number, for he explained that different young people are appearing in costumes and presenting the dances of different countries, and he especially remarked about one of his girl friends who is appearing as a Dutch girl, wooden shoes and all. A jet black Cane River girl doing a clog in wooden shoes really ought to be something out of the ordinary.

5329

A flock of people interrupted my sitting with said sextetary just as we were about the undertake a glance at the notes you so kindly enclosed. I could have shot the pilgrims, for I was a ready having to push back the said secretary who, naturally was anxious to get on his way to rig up his own costume, - but since the interruption came, I figured I might as well let Y. C. slide and tomorrow we shall unde take the notes.

As for Helen's letter, it, of course, remains unread, and inxx today's post came an exqually long one from Beth Mead which must await another sitting, and an air mail from Carl Harness, and half a dozen others, including one from Mary Lambdin which, I suppose, is simply a thank you item for the plate. But all of these can wait, as I "don't have to catch a train". If only I could catch a good secretary.

The rain continued all night and a fairly brisk breeze, which rattled things about and probably accounted for the lightness of my sleep and the consequent tendency to dream. I shall not elaborate on one that seems to have re-enacted itself twice, between a brief awakening after the first. It was as confused in sequence and possibility or impossibility as dreams are likely to be, but it was in color which is rare for me, since most dreams, so far as I am concerned, inclined to be in black and white. Little Miss Lee in a gray-blue traveling suit was a central figure, and as plain as day were various lovely halls and corridors of an educational institution I once attended, and had forgotten about years ago, following its destruction by fire. But the vast old pile was no longer a school but a residence and there was some confusion introduced by a personaity I discovered I had almost forgotten, so far as the individual features went, although recent report of his severence of relations from former associates in business probably be-stirred a brain cell, not noted at the time of the stirring. Everything was clear-clear, and the nicest part of the episode was that in the end everything turned out so pleasantly and Miss Lee and I decided that the great wing of the old place, - superbly Quatorzien, would make such a lovely place where one might linger forever and ever, and I woke up, fell asleep again, went through the same unreeling of the film, and then woke up at precisely the same spot. I wonder what Freud or the other dream authorities could do with all that. Personally I couldn't do much, but I liked it regardless.

About 10 this morning the sun came out. We are promised a low of 28 to 30 tonight, for it will be cloudless for the next couple of days. I have tucked in the children at Arenbourg and Melrose, hoping that if they escape a frost tonight, they may be bothered by no more this season. Do take care of your cold and get lots of rest.....

Robina 2/24/52
5330

Wednesday, Feb. 27th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I never heard of "cannon lilies", but I laid out a bed of golden day lilies around the cannon hard by the old magnolia at the side gate, - the cannon slap in the middle of the path that divides to the left toward the side gate, to the right toward the big house. I elevated the cannon some 8 or 10 inches, and encircled it with the day lilies which are going to make a nice combination, I think, when the lilies start to bloom if the cannon doesn't boom and knock the floral necklace into the middle of next week.

Our frost of last night was not important and today's intense sunshine brought temperatures up to the point where jackets had to be discarded. The promise for the morrow is fair and warmer.

As for the work on the Yucca foundations and sills, it progressed famously, with an entire new sill running the full length of the East end of the house, facing Yucca or rather the African house. But oddly enough, as though the jinx were still "hovering" about, a water pipe srprung a leak under the house just about the time the workmen were ready to leave. They said they thought it wouldn't flood the foundations of the house too much. It is connected with the line that goes to J. A.'s house and as everyone there is in a panic about having ample water supplies, the thing couldn't be disconnected. I sit here "holding the thought".

I am rather weary tonight, having had a busy day and read the enclosure but scantily, and yet I am sending it along regardless, what with the stacks of other stuff I have awaiting my attention. I thought that one line in the letter would please you, as it did me, --the reference to little Miss Lee.

Fortunately I got in a few licks both at Arenbourg and Melrose tis morning, for the afternoon turned out to be a shambles.

Just after dinner a Dr. and Mrs. Smith of Winfield came

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5331

for a go-round. I had met Mrs. Smith before but didn't know her husband. I accommodated. Before we were finished, Blythe arrived with some ladies from Cape Cod, New Jersey and Wisconsin. There was some Taylor port and some delicious chicken sandwiches and cake, but before I got into any of that department, we were in the Yucca living room, a flock of ladies appeared on the gallery. It turned out to be the sisters Bertha and Hope Haupt with ladies from Minnesota and the Lord knows where all. I didn't invite them in but rather left the first contingent holding the fort and started out on a tour with the latest batch. Before we had progressed far, some ladies, hailing from Dallas blew in. I attached them to the tour in progress. The sisters Haupt wanted another Melrose Memorial plate. I left them on the gallery of the big house, and returned to Yucca, where I found some colored school teachers awaiting me on said gallery, the Rand contingent still holding the fort inside. I had a quick glass of wine, after asking the colored teachers to return on the morrow, and as their school takes them slap by Melrose this will not be difficult. Then Blythe said her contingent had to depart, and I asked her to do the honors of a tour for them, while I galloped back with the Haupt desiderata. Blythe must have cut the tour short, for she was coming in the back door of Melrose as the Haupt crowd decided they wanted another plate and I shunted them to Yucca to wait for me. I finally got the Rand crowd on their way and returned to Yucca when the workmen needed my attention, and so the Haupts waited, but I finally got rid of them, and on dragging my hips from the front gate, I found my secretary awaiting me on the gallery at Yucca. But we read a little before the workmen needed my advise again, and so I sent Y. C. on his way, whereupon the water pipe cracked and a plumber had to be rounded up, and couldn't be tracked down. After that the supper bell rang and it was first dark.

J. A. asked me if it was too late to plant crepe myrtles. I told him it wasn't. He said he would send me a flock from the garden of the overseer's house, which leads me to assume the overseer isn't coming back, I hope, for I certainly wouldn't care for any of his crepe myrtles if he is. I reckon he probably isn't.

I got home just in time to hear Ed. Morrow, and now that I have reeled off about as dull a letter as possible, I propose splashing through a hot shower, reading a little from the Scholar Adventurers and then folding up my beard.

I have thought of you so often and hoped the cold is ever so much on the mend. Please go slow.....

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Postell 2/26 5332

Dora M
Alden Baldwin
Bessie Head

Thursday, February 28th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I'm so glad all the pilgrims came yesterday, at least all whom I saw, although I do understand a couple were turned back because I had advised the store I wouldn't receive any.

The net result is that I am about as tired as I was last night, but with energies expended on other items than name-sakes of those who made the Mayflower crossing.

And it is a matter of vast satisfaction that for the first time in too many generations, there are so solid foundations under Yucca. The house could have been jacked up a couple of more inches, but since it is guaranteed not to sag any more, the present level suits me.

And the chapel has a new floor, almost too new so far as appearance would make it, except that I covered it with a grass matting, about 10 feet square and made up of foot squares of matting about an inch in thickness. The suggestion of grass not only blots out the newness of the fresh plants in the flooring but at the same time goes over so sympathetically with the mud walls and hand hewn beams.

And once more the brick pavement is down, the dirt that had been piled there scrubbed away, the two Saints out of the bathroom and into their respective places and the front gallery relieved of all the plunder which somehow again fits neatly into place on the back gallery giving on the White Garden.

So much for that afternoon. The morning was equally busy. J. A. asked me to drive down to the site of Mr. Earnest's house. Parenthetically, Mr. Earnest has been in town with his daughter all week. J. A. showed me a line fence separating the back of Mr. Earnest's kitchen garden and said he was moving the line much nearer the house, when the new structure is built, as Mr. Earnest no longer makes a garden. He said he was going to plant cotton where the kitchen garden stands and therefore the four crepe myrtles on the line would be cut down and the roots ploughed up, --unless I wanted to bother with them. I did.

5333

And so * J. H. had them dug for me. Then J. H. went on to Baton Rouge and I hurried to Melrose and Arenbourg, where I had two holes dug at each place to receive the trees, for the stems are perhaps 4 inches in diameter perhaps 6 inches, and each, after being severely trimmed back is about 18 feet high. At Arenbourg I planted the two to the East or South rather of the old residence and at Melrose in the new Gardener's Garter garden with a view of holding down the ends of the U. It took four stout men to get them from the truck into the holes and I very much doubt if any of them survive, -- the root system surviving the digging was so comparatively meager in proportion to all the chords of wood represented by everything above the roots. But it did no harm to try, and if they survive, well and good, and if they don't, we have other crepe myrtles. I believe these are the water melon red ones, which I think are among the nicer so far as shading goes.

Thanks to Dr. Knipmeyer, I got a bit of my rearing down, and shall send Helen and Beth Mead along, either herewith or under separate cover. Helen is as gay as usual, but I found the Mead item less so. It is interesting that one lady mentioned the other, -- Dallas mentioned Waco, -- in these two letters coming but a day apart.

I saw Celeste for a moment this morning as she grabbed a cup off coffee before starting for the Hyman Cohen funeral held in Natchitoches. She was altogether delighted with her birthday greetings from you and was so good as to show me the lovely picture and to read me the letter which struck me as being just perfect and I could easily understand why there were moist pools in her eyes as she concluded it. I thought every sentence expertly handled and I must congratulate you with many a salvo and citation.

Day before yesterday I intended thanking you for your account of the contents of the Holiday article about Louisiana. I am glad to know how the material was handled and what was stressed and what skipped. Naturally I am delighted that the Cane River country didn't get mentioned since the likelihood of an exclusive article on that subject is accordingly that much more acceptable for any of the Curtiss Publishing magazines. The more I think about it, the more I believe the Melrose Memorial plate might well be used as an illustration for the stuff Carolyn and I were fiddling with, since the thing is pictorial to start with and ends up with some notations regarding color that seem to jibe nicely with other salient features in the proposed account of the region. One striking way to open the Post article might be by remarking that when Holiday did Louisiana, it did what everybody else before has done, skipped, ignored or never knew of the fabulous Cane River country.....

Hastings 2/26
Sister 7/26
Harmon 2/26
5334

Friday, February 29th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The stamps, if I remember to attach them, are in payment of nothing. They simply came to hand in a tiny note from la belle Storm, -- one of those postage size envelopes containing (containing* but a line and the stamps, and what with all the plunder that has been sailing about here, I have completely lost the envelope and note but have found the stamps on the coffee-table-bidet, of all places.

The high winds of March must not have realized February had an extra day this year, for they have been blowing at about 25 to 30 miles an hour all day, under a warm sun and cooling the warm air not at all. We are promised a bit of rain for the week end, and I hope so, to refresh the plants, and especially the newly transplanted crepe myrtles, and to dampen the ardor of the road runners at the same time.

And speaking of the crepe myrtles, I glanced at one of them today, and found it was rather larger in its trunk than I had supposed, for I reckon it must be about ten inches thick instead of whatever the lesser figure I estimated yesterday. I can't imagine it will survive, but at least I shall have had a try at it, along with the other three which, perhaps, have a 50-50 break.

I spent the entire morning at Arenbourg, after I got one or two little matters taken care of at Yucca. I had sent Andy, who wasn't working for the plantation, on ahead of me, and we really got quite a lot accomplished, especially in shaping up the hedges and cutting down 10 foot oaks that had volunteered in places they had no right to flourish.

Everything up yonder seems to have come through into full spring a little earlier than the same type of plant at Melrose, although Arenbourg is more air-ish and would under normal circumstances tread a little slower, I should think. The pears look so wonderful this year, and the blossoms were so thick a few weeks back, I think we should really have quite a crop this year. The persimmons haven't put out their leaves as yet.

5335

With the thermometer at 86 this afternoon and a promised drop of 40 degrees tonight, the weather bureau is having a great time pointing out that this is one of the great variations on record for February 29th, which, after all, doesn't come up for air anyway quite so often as do other days in March.

Today I ordered some dahlias for Arenbourg on behalf of "us-es" and another batch on behalf of Melrose for Melrose. I have in mind planting the Arenbourg ones by the old raggedy house where their stability can be easily enhanced by the bannister of the gallery, while those for Melrose I shall plant along the fence at the Northwest corner of the big house where said fence separates the two cisterns. The fence will provide adequate support at that point, as against an occasional gust of wind which tends to topple dahlias in a region where the extreme richness of the soil induces the plants to attain too great a height. Somehow it always seems a little ridiculous to have to round up a ladder before being able to cut one's self a harmless bouquet of this type of flower.

I am ordering from the Waxahachie Nursery at Waxahachie, Texas, -- a town quite near Tyler, the famous rose center of Texas where old Bettie Green's son developed the American Beauty rose. Sometimes Waxahachie is slow in filling orders, but so far as the present instance is concerned, I assume the order will be filled promptly, since I am in no hurry for it. In the North one does well to get dahlias in as soon after Spring frosts as possible, it seems to me, whereas in the South I prefer planting late, for the intense heat of August and September tends to wilt the blossoms and the colors during the hot season are inclined to be much paler than when the more moderate days come and the plants take on a more sturdy appearance and the colors become much more vivid. The ideal arrangement is to induce the plants to come into flower along about the middle of September and from there on out until the frost knocks them silly after the middle of November, they seem to flourish at their best.

The white draperies for the Chapel are back from the laundry and I am getting Adam Regard to sew on the rings, and tomorrow I shall rig up that department and the Chapel will be back in order again. I hold the thought both Manhattan and Melrose may have a measure of quiet this week end....

5336

Miss Kate 2/28
Mary Mayall 2/28
Mrs. Sutton 2/28
Mrs. Storm 2/28
Cornelia May 2/28

Sunday, March 2nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

Cloudy and mild with a pin point drizzle now and then. Some of the crepe myrtles are beginning to put out little leaves, and as they are usually slow in the Spring parade, this would seem to indicate the procession is actually passing. Oddly enough, both at Arenbourg and Melrose there is a water melon red crepe myrtle that never succeeds in keeping up with any of the other shrubs and trees. Twice Blythe has asked me why I have cut down the Melrose one, apparently as dead as a skeleton when everything else has made up its mind. But eventually it comes through, and when it does, its blossoms are the most imposing of any I know.

I saw Celeste momentarily on Saturday morning. She told me when she and Adam Regard were alone, some executive telephoned from Baton Rouge, asking if representatives of Life would be received on Tuesday or Wednesday. She told the Baton Rouge caller she knew I would be glad to kick out the red carpet. Hummmmm.....

I am hoping this is merely a flock of "Lifers" bent on seeing ye olde plantation and not gunning with camera. If little Miss Ramsey were in communication with me, she would be having a fit, I reckon. Well, I'm not having a fit, but I shall be interested to see what is cooking. With the Matchez Pilgrimage opening today, perhaps they are shooting hoop skirts today, --slightly dampened ones, and plan bagging the Cane River country on Tuesday.

I finished the Altick opus, Scholar Adventurers, and while parts of it were more interesting than others, I should have been glad if it had gone on at least a couple of thousand pages.

There were a few letters or brief notes I had in mind passing along which somehow got mixed up with some unread mail, not to mention some trash intended for the waste basket, and, I regret to say, all of these items somehow got confused with some unread stuff which may or may not have come to your true hand. The only letter I can recall which I did not read, but which certainly reached me some days back, was from Mary Ambdin, and was probably a mere Thank You note for the plate, but should it come to your attention, -- showing up within the past week, I should be glad if you would

5337

mention it.

Although a letter earlier in the week from Shreveport threatened a visitation by the Wenks on Friday, they actually got here at high noon today to the accompaniment of the usual flurries of excitement about nothing at all.

It must be admitted, however, that the little girl added to the pandemonium a little by knocking the water system out of commission in "your" bathroom, with the result that during dinner the entire pantry and dining room below were flooded, --a gentle note contributing greatly to the delights of Sunday dinner. One result of this contribution has been the absence of all water from the entire Melrose go-round of pipes and conduits and I ended up by taking a shower of sorts in a bird bath.

Pat was home for the week end, but was smart enough to accept a Sunday dinner invitation at Raynie's in town, and that left Ben and me holding the bags. As usual, when such visitations occur, I felt as though I had a lap full.

Along about the last chapter of the Altick book, I again ran across Fanny Ratchford and her study of the Bronte books, composed during the childhood of Emily and Charlotte, the latter continuing their composition until about her 23rd year, although the first had been tossed off when the children were 7 or 8 years old. From the account, it is difficult to imagine how these volumes were contrived. When transcribed on a typewriter, the text

covers about 125 pages, but in the Bronte hand, these volumes, --about the size of a postage stamp, -- one inch square, cover only 24 pages. It goes without saying the text of the original has to be explored with a microscope, and one can but marvel how the Bronte girls could have penned such manuscripts. It seems to me if would have been wonderful if they had penned out a single sheet in such minute script, but to have created whole books, and year after year, is wonderful.

Tonight's weather report promises cold and rain for the first half of this week, which easily ought to dampen the ardor of tomorrow's medical assortment, Tuesday's Life and Wednesday's "allas contingent. Well, so be it, --for I have plenty of things to attend to, and I shall not miss the pilgrims.....

.....

Mary Lambdin 3/10
Miss Myra 2/1
5338

Monday, March 3rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

A heavy shower at dawning, with hail probably falling heavily somewhere off to the north, for it grew cold suddenly, but warmed into the 70's when the sun came about before noon.

About 20 doctors and assistants showed up for the afternoon tour, and no sooner was I done with them that some people from Bay City, Wisconsin, where ever that may be, came by, under the wing of Father Calahan, and so I did the whole thing over again. The Wisconsin numbers had been in Natchez yesterday for the opening gun of the pilgrimage. They said there were lots of people.

And tomorrow, -- perhaps, -- comes the Life business. I gleaned another bit of news on that subject from Celeste who said she just remembered that during the Baton Rouge telephone conversation, it was stated that the visit hinged on the wish to do "elrose for Life. That sounds a little complicated but I reckon I'll be able to manage it alright. Until a conference has been held, it is silly to speculate how the matter will be handled. Perhaps Life can devote itself exclusively to Melrose and Carolyn and I can cover the mulatto area using Melrose as a pivot. Perhaps we can stress the mulatto while Life can emphasize the contemporary aspects of the present century against a backdrop of deeper color. It will be interesting to see how the thing turns. The night prediction for tomorrow is cloudy and cold. That ought to take out all the atmosphere of sub-tropical Louisiana for everybody.

Under separate cover are some letters of no moment and an article about the Kleisers which contains nothing especial, either. I am glad to report, as you will note, that the Lambdin letter, about which I spoke yesterday, came to hand, and indeed contained nothing of moment. It is interesting that nobody ever inquires about the identity of Clemence and her house, although I am equally impressed that the frivolous and pedantic do more inquiring about the Indian Mound than any other item on the plate. Perhaps this is because it is the only mound in the Natchitoches - Cane River country, and that for the pedants, it comes as a surprise to learn of its existence.

5339

8888

Drs. Alban and Pierce were down from the experimental station in the Shreveport area today, and remained for dinner. You may have noticed Dora's recent inquiry about the availability of pecane oil. J. A. knew nothing about it. I had never heard of the stuff and had no idea for what it might be used. And so I asked Dr. Alban and he reports it is used for food, as any of the food oils, - salades, cooking and so on, but that it is so terribly expensive that it seems to be impossible as a commercial item at present. I can well imagine. With pecanes selling at whatever price they sell per pound, and the probability that a pound wouldn't be likely to produce more than a drop or so, I should imagine a bottle of the stuff ought to run into quite a figure. I must say, however, that I should imagine the oil, if it carries any suggestion of the pecane in flavor, ought to be as delicious as the price would seem to suggest.

In spite of the downpour, I made a little round at Arenbourg this morning, thinking I couldn't get any more soaked than I was after merely jumpo ing from Ucca to the Post Office, and I was delighted to find that some tender little leaves were already unfolding on the persimmons, which seems to be early, as are other things. Of course the pears have been in leaf for a couple of weeks or so, --all save two or three varieties that put on their green finery unusually late, but I think this time lag in Spring, --and the corresponding one in autumn is ever so pleasant, since it seems to give the avenue a much long span of shade, say from late February to mid November.

I am in the doldrums as to reading at the moment, although there seems to be a book on Government or Democracy or modern governmental trends by Raoul Roussy de Sale or however that gentleman whom the boy friend used to admire spells his name. I never met the man but once, --I think we attended some broadcast in the A. C. A. studios in the mid 1930's, and, if memory serves, he has subsequently died. There is another book, a Harper publication, entitled something like Life on a Medieval Barony or some such, which, if a well rigged thing, ought to give some interesting pictures of how things turned "way back yonder", although as the years slide along, none of the years of the Christian era seem so very far back.

Obviously such a remark suggests I must be gathering a lot of Spanish moss in my perruque, but what with planting season in full swing, scant grass at the moment is growing under my feet.....

1288

Ethel Gloman

5340

Tuesday, March 4th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday and Thursday letters, in today's post, and may I thank you billions for telling all. That your cough and sniffles continue doesn't surprise me, what with this curious type of influenza dragging on so endlessly in the aftermath stages. But, please, please, be kind to yourself and if and when possible, grab off rest.

It is nice to be able to keep abreast with doings below the Gulf, and to get some inkling as to what the scholars are up to. Well can I imagine they have had enough of Winter for one season, for it would appear New England has been getting gots of it this year.

I am so glad to hear of "White House Profile" of which I had not heard mentioned. It sounds wonderful and I know I would like it. It's about time for another Library of Congress selection list for Talking Books recordings to be coming our way, and if you don't mind, I'll bounce it in your direction again, and you might tack on the name of the White House number as our recommendation.

And speaking of books, I think your recommendation regarding Daisey in the Dell an excellent one. I shall drop her a letter, touching on the matter and we might have her add her article to the others on Melrose, thus bringing the picture up to date. Or rather, she might slip in the original script she submitted to the Dallas News which the Editor cut considerably.

I have been turning the matter of the manuscript over in my mind for some time and have intended consulting you on one point that glimmered faintly in my imagination. After la Storm returns from Europe and is settled at the Bluff again, it might not be a bad idea of Daisey in the Dell doesn't get any where with the manuscript to send it to la Storm for her entertainment. I'm under the impression she might feel it should be published, what with her

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inter st in Louisiana subject matter and her kindness toward people in general. Please let that thought simmer in your mind during the summer and let me know what conclusion you reach by autumn. Just because la Storm bought the sisters Dormon a new car last year is no sign she would engineer the printing of the manuscript in question, but she might chance to beat the drum in just the right direction and precisely the right moment, and the trick might be turned thereby.

I wasn't at all surprised at your mention of the South Louisiana trip and the iron coffin, for I reckon the way I wrote the thing might easily have led anyone to suppose I had been among those present. After all, I have been in that neighborhood with the Madam and we have talked iron coffins so often it almost seems as though I had been along in person, and heaven knows I have been there often enough in spirit.

I'm glad you mentioned the Southern Book Club, or whatever it is called. Disinterested people, such as la Storm, might be able to do a lot for Southern subject matter and authors concerned with the same, but I have a feeling the Carter-Kane group may well be motivated by everything except disinterestedness, and it seems to me not impossible that the group might well sponsor a Kane Life of Dorothy Dix or Mrs. Robert E. Lee, just as the Rosenwald Foundation gave Kane 2 or 3 successive grants to write a book he has never written, and, as he explained to me, he never had the slightest intention of turning out. A Southern watering pot for the nurturing of literary subjects on the South might accomplish wonderful things in the hands of hoest gardeners, but of one thing I am sure, Mr. Kane is not such a horticulturalist and of late doubt troubles my mind as regards Herr Carter.

I regret to say the Life contingent didn't show up today, which means, of course, that they may be looked for on the morrow when I had hoped to have the decks fairly clear for Beth Mead and her companion, for I don't like mixing business and pleasure and so far as I am concerned the Life thing is going to be handled in a distinctly non-society manner. I dropped Helen a note, beginning by saying she had better not upset Carolyn by passing the reference to Life along to her, and then adding further along, perhaps she had better. --But here we are at the end of our chat, and again I must say how happy your letters have made my day.....

5342

Wednesday, March 5th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I'm writing a little later than usual simply because I sat down to hear the Ed. Morrow newscast, fell asleep in my chair, and have just awakened two hours later. But the necessity of doing a few chores and the realization of a desire to splash through a warm bath have restored wakefulness and a measure of vim and vigor.

I am glad to say that Life showed up not at all, which saved me loss of energy to do other things and, on the morrow I think I shall be much less busy, should anybody show up.

But Beth Mead appeared on schedule with her companion, a pleasant woman in her 60's, bringing news from little Miss Alberta, whom they saw in New Orleans. --Miss Alberta asking them to tell me she wants to come to paint Melrose magnolias in May but is afraid to stay in the big house alone. What with Ben, a likely youth, not to mention the noisy Wenk children, who ought to be descending on the place to remain all summer along about then, little Miss A. shouldn't be lonesome.

Beth arrived about 2, reported a pleasant journey, and brought greetings from Myrtle of Cherokee and from Miss Myra. She also brought a couple of bottles of wine from Solari's, or however that purveyor of fine wines in New Orleans or however that institution spells its name. The labels look as though the stuff might be imported and probably is some kind of a rare vintage that tastes like a refined vinegar, as usually seems to be my fate inside the cork when a passing pilgrim strains himself to do something special. Beth and her companion remained about an hour, and I was glad to chat with them, for my morning had been active and the balance of my day would be equally so. The weather was pure Spring, and the back gallery just right. After a little tour with the ladies, I suggested they collapse there, and what with my casement window, along side my bed being open, I let the Caballero rendition of the Strauss Waltzes filter out from my boudoir while the ladies caught their breath and I returned to give a couple of suggestions to some gardening operations that had just reached the boiling point when they arrived.

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5343

I think the opportunity to catch their breath and the delights supplied by the Caballero artistry gave just the right touch to the travelers before they sampled a little glass of wine, - and headed out for Texas.

Yesterday J. H. sent me a flock of laborers because he didn't have anything for them to do at the moment and thought I might like to turn them loose in the crepe myrtles. His idea in crepe myrtles is snipping off an inch or two from the top most twigs every year. My policy is to trim them ever other year, and cut off 2 or 3 feet, keeping the trees at a standard height, while, were his theory followed, the things would eventually end up as sky scrapers. As usually happens when field hands are turned loose in the gardens, they frolic quite a lot, smash up a heap of valuable stuff, and spend most of their time piddling. This morning I was determined if I was again to receive such a flock of brawny blacks, I was going to have something to show for operations at the end of the day, and so with the opening gun, I said I didn't want any gardeners but merely a few fence movers, and that is what I got. And so, after too long a delay, I got a fence moved, -- the one just beyond, - to the East, of the fan light in the studio. I pushed it and its big old sprawling double gate back as far as the water tower, thereby creating a new garden for Melrose and a heap of pleasure for myself in thus contriving what had been a wood lot and pasture into the foundation for a new garden. Fifteen or twenty good sided crepe myrtles had to be transplanted to the sight of the new fence, gobs of giants beard dug from some place and moved thither to form borders for flower beds, gobs of day lilies moved to give special greenery to the new beds and so on and so forth. Andy was giving me a hand, and before anybody knew it, a new parterre had turned up where but yesterday had been a paradise of burdock and weeds. And that was that.

As Beth and her friend drew away from the front gate, a car stopped where their's had stood. It was the lady doctor. She happened to be heading toward the residence of the widow of Ayman when down the road, and merely wanted to chat at this unexpected conjunction of two luminaries whose paths so seldom cross. She reported on Peter who had gone to her yesterday on my recommendation, - a boil inside his ear, and she wanted to pass along the latest gossip from town that le maitre had definite ideason a final goodbye to the Harper's Bazaar number quite similar to that Napoleon exercised in terminating his relations with Josephine, - a rumor neither of us put any stock in. Thus my day played out and hence this tiresome letter. I'm feeling sleepy but well, and may you say as much.....

D.D. 3/3/52
Overdyke 3/1
Madam Bates 4/7
5344

Thursday, March 6th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your copy of Holiday in this morning's post. It's advent was most timely what with today being Knipmeyer day, and so we had a good go at the Street article, although we came no where near completing it, and so I shall set it out, come next Thursday, when we may have another go at it.

It is interesting that in today's post came two letters referring to the Street article. It is premature, of course, for me to judge it, since I haven't finished it, but what I did read I found exceedingly readable and withal quite jolly, and sufficiently paradoxical in many of its statements as to make it unusually appealing.

I found his treatment of the average citizens -- the one living North of Red River, the other living South of it, to be an excellent way to present the difference between the Nordic North and the Latin South, and the traits attributed to each were pat, it seemed to me.

I am saving the pictures to see in tomorrow's day light, as Dr. Knipmeyer arrived before I had had an opportunity to turn through the body of the magazine, and I preferred to hear him read slap off, since I could turn through the pages and view the Pailanges and so on at my leisure. But circumstances piled up immediately after Dr. A. left, and it was dark before I got back to home base from pirouetting from parterre to parterre.

I suppose there is no relationship between the Overdyke lack of enthusiasm over the Street article and the Overdyke enthusiasm for Mr. Taft. And yet there may be. I take it Dr. Overdyke is a rugged individualist, -- an odd character for one in the history business. His reason for looking with favor on Taft as one who would save us from becoming a socialist state seems odd. After all, what's wrong with a socialist state, I think I shall ask him. I suppose Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and so on are socialist states in one form or another, and if I understand the matter correctly, the logical development of any civilization that

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is likely to survive very long is going to move of necessity in the direction of what I understand to be a socialist state. Of course my most fearful objection to Taft is my feeling that he would try to set the clock back were he to be elected, but on second thought, that might hasten a forward jump rather than a logical forward step, for come to think of it, we must always be indebted to Herbert Hoover for having made F. D. R. inevitable, and with Mr. Taft as definitely a rugged individualist in politics he might gum up the works sufficiently so that a flock more of Roosevelt ideas, blocked by the war, might get into Law, if Mr. Taft would only make the White House for a single session.

The weather remains wonderfully clear but a cold Northeast wind today kept the thermometer in the 60's, and tonight, although a little "air-ish", the sky is lovely, what with a nice fat waxing moon and the promise of warmer days ahead.

I suppose I lingered a little long over a couple of things I was trying to finish and so got a little cold, with the sniffles coming back on me tonight. But I'm taking a couple of pills, passed along by the lady doctor, - and they seem to be pretty good for breaking up a cold, and I believe I shall be quite rid of the thing by morning.

I'm not reading much at the moment for the Davis book about a medieval castle, its life and its various aspects of life are informative, but the volume is read by somebody or other who has a curious, monotonous voice, and I find myself asleep before I get three minutes into a single page. But I like that sort of thing occasionally, for I find it an excellent way to get caught up on sleep if one really isn't tired, and I always try to keep one of that type within reach just in case I don't collapse as soon as I want to, which is might seldom.

I am disregarding the request of Daisey in the Dell to destroy the data concerning Weeks, - first, because I want to share it with you and secondly because in your file, it will never reflect unpleasantly on anybody concerned, while eventually it may serve as a pertinent piece of mosaic in the picture of contemporary life in Louisiana. The mystery shrouding the episode at the time of its inception is thus clarified and seems to me a necessary link in the saga of one who is something more than a minor character on the current scene. If I am wrong in not having destroyed the letter, feel perfectly free to do so.....

5346

Friday, March 7th, 1952.

Memorandum:
Another cloudless day with the sunshine still tempered by a chill East wind. But I didn't mind it, what with the medicine I took last night seeming to eradicate the cold and sniffles completely.

And so, with the ex help of a couple of dusky assistants, I set in new posts and stretched wire on a new fence between Arenbourg and Alfred, the other having just about played out. There was ample air astir, but somehow I didn't mind it so much as yesterday, and I reckon it was a bit warmer.

It was good to hear from Ora again, and I shall be glad to welcome her guests. We have had so many dampish week ends, although not always on Sunday of late, that I am hoping the 16th may be pleasant. The Parrish Library, having nothing by way of connection with Ora's college outfit, telephoned me this morning, saying that Essae Mae was planning to pass this way shortly, and inquired if I had heard the names of any of her guests, as they were making a list of guest speakers but lacked one or two names and hoped I might supply them. I understand friend Postell is doing a song and dance and Dr. Lyle, Librarian of U. S. U. among others. It will be pleasant to see Postell. I don't know Dr. Lyle.

In receiving the librarians, I have already decided they will not have access to the scrapbooks, not to much as a glance in the direction of the second floor of the big house. It is possible none of the Archives people will be numbered among those who will be received, --they are the ones always making a racket, I believe, but if nobody visits the scrapbook collection, they at least will not carry away any memory of their appearance.

As for the threatened guests of Tuesday or Wednesday, there hasn't been a "peep out of Life", as it were. I think both Life and the Baton Rouge officials who telephoned

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for the appointment are out of order, since a second telephone or a line, mentioning confusion in the original schedule had forced an alteration of their plans. But frankly I'm just as happy if they never do show up. After all, I don't have to beat the drum in hopes of enticing some pilgrims to this bend of the river, and a go-round in life would probably put a heap of ideas in various peoples minds, - especially those who are foot-loose and aying for a bit of excuse to waste somebody else's time.

At the Post Office this morning, a tall mulatto youth entered with a slip of a girl, - that is to say, not a girl's slip, but a young-ish young lady, and the youth whom I did not recognize, came to me with his companion and said he would like to introduce Edward's wife. I couldn't imagine any Edward I knew who would be likely to have such a fair-skinned spouse, and I didn't want to act as though non-plused, and so I made some inane small chatter and they went on their way. It turned out that the tall youth was one of the mulatto Merrills, one who was rescued back to life after having pretty well drowned a year or so ago, - some of the Bands doing the rescuing, as I recall, and Edward is a brother who has been, as I learned subsequently in the Orient, where he married a girl in the Phillipines. What her status, racially, may be, I wouldn't have the vaguest notion, although I suppose Phillipine pre-supposes a bit of yellow and possible a dash of black, although that is purely a guess on my part. In any event, Gene Silver must seem like quite a piece from the Far Pacific, and since Edward must be in a colored company, I suppose the wife may likewise have some claim to a similar ancestry, or some other color paralleling. Just so long as she is happy in this far away new home of hers, that's all that matters, but it must seem far, I imagine.

The dahlias ordered from Waxahachie, Texas, arrived today, and I find them apparently A, No. 1, so far as health and the promise of vigor may be judged from the roots which look alarmingly like sweet potatoes. I immediately slapped them into a cool resting place and shall leave them in that situation for another week or two, for I don't want to plant them too early, not for fear of frost, but rather the intense heat of full summer.

Fair and warmer is the forecast for local week end weather. For you, I'm holding the thought it may be restful and full of relaxation....

5348

Sunday, March 9th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Except for the racket that seems to have become a firmly established custom for Sunday dinner, --the Wenks, --the week end has been comparatively quiet.

Pilgrims have been comparatively quiet, too, although I must confess it hasn't trickled away to the vanishing point as yet. Okalhoma City, for example, paused at the Melrose gate before 9 o'clock this morning, bent on doing Melrose, after spending the night at Watchitoches, and then proceeding to "atchez, Bellingrath Gardens, New Orleans, and so back to home base. I had already been up for hours when Sam Peace brought me a note from the pilgrims, which was so much waste paper sinceneither Sam nor I can read, but I got the general idea regardless.

Pat is here for the week end. He had some boys down from the air base who lingered at Celeste's for dinner, and then came to see me. They were but recently returned Bavaria and seemed entranced when I inquired about the status of Linderhof, Herrenchiemsee and Neuschwanstein, and it goes without saying I was delighted to learn that all three are being kept up nicely by whatever the present Bavarian Government is, - American or German, I forgetting to ask, but believe it is German.

I am happy to report I got a little reading done on Saturday night. In a carton labeled "Three Lectures on Democracy" by Carl Becker, I sampled the first page and found the contents excellent. Herr Becker dated the Preface from Ithaca, New York, so I assume he may be a Cornell professor. The lectures were given at Charlottesville, at the University of Virginia.

But to tell the truth, I was disappointed when I discovered the whole business was complete on three records, and I was curious to find what the balance of a dozen records in the same carton might contained., since there was no notation on the outside of the carton. Shhhh.. don't breath it loud enough for Senator McCarthy to hear, -- it was Leon Potosky's "Capitalism of Karl Marx." It seemed erudite but dull, and I merely skimmed through it.

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On occasion, I fear I'm inclined to be a little rough on Celeste, but today she brought forward one of her noblest gestures when she learned Pat's friends were coming to see him, arriving before noon, for she instinctively sense that Pat would be under a nerve strain, entertaining civilized people at dinner with all the Wenk hubbub going on, and accordingly invited Pat to have his friends come with him across the fence to dinner. At least there was peace and good will, and what's more the food is always excellent, so that angle of the day turned out to perfection.

It started drizzling about 5 o'clock and Dr. Rand and Luther Harrison dropped in to see me just before a sudden little shower passed this way. There didn't seem to be much news but it was pleasant to chat with them, and I shall think of their visit later tonight when I explore what undoubtedly is an elegant supper Plythe sent along for my delectation.

The Dark Duke passed by to see yesterday evening. He says Peter's ear seems to be draining alright and that their sister, Alle, is going to take him back to Alexandria with her tonight, for she was to drive up today to see how he was getting along and I shouldn't be surprised if Peter remains in Alexandria with her for a few months or perhaps permanently for he and Eugene don't get along well together and friction on the planation usually inclines the person of color to withdraw.

And speaking of names, I was delighted when in response to my inquiry, my secretary, Y. B. Mack, told me whence his name stems. His father, known locally as Beau Mack, is named A. C. Mack, while his mama, - Juanita, has always been called by that name, although local dialect pronounces Juanita as though it were spelled Y-nita. And so when the first born son arrived, they took a segement of both papa and mama's names and dubbed the child Y. C., -- just as simple as that.

So begins a new week, and one that will probably be fairly busy, and so I am glad of the comparative quiet of yesterday and today. I so much hope you have had a measure of the same peacefulness, it somehow lends so much strength to run of the mill demands of the work-a-day week that follows.....

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Monday, March 10th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter of Tuesday-Wednesday in today's post.

Lord! Lord! Don't worry your pretty head about the Storm clippings. They sit here on my desk, --that is all. I immediately on receiving them, wrote La Storm, asking if I might keep them a little longer and then, --what with indifferent secretaries, I believe she did not mention them, and from day to day I have awaited a letter, and so the thing has dragged on. I shall speak of them later, and try to explore them if possible right soon. Had I only known there would have been such a gang-up of circumstances, --no reader, no response from The Bluff Plantation, the clippings might have sailed to Manhattan and back a half dozen times while I waited.

I'm so happy you had such a pleasant evening at the Theatre on Tuesday evening, and how kind it is of you to give me such revealing glimpses of Miss Skinner's undertakings in her current venture. Truly she is a remarkable artist and I am hoping an appreciative public will make the current run both long and profitable to her, both on her own account and on the general encouragement that must follow in similar lines of theatrical excellence.

Tonight's news casts indicate there has been a great deal of weather in the Mobile and Oklahoma City regions. It has rained and drizzled here since last night and quite a lot of water came down, but while the winds at times were brisk, I reckon they never exceeded 25 miles an hour, and what with the thermometer rising last night, the wet and warm will make things jump in the garden department. A late bulletin from the weather department indicates the storm center has moved out of Louisiana and into Mississippi.

An air mail from Helen came in today's post. It was cancelled on Friday, and naturally was delivered today, and I got around to read it about first dark tonight. As she suggests a response, if I cannot entertain her and Lucille, -- the response to be sent to the News Tribune, --which obviously is closed at this hour of first dark, I shall send her a wire in the morning, saying I can't "sleep" them. Actually

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I could, but there is too much cooking in the offing, --the chance of friends of unpleasant members of the family honoring us, and I see no reason to go through the excitement of trying to make both ends meet when the Waco ladies can just as readily park at the Natchitoches hostelry, --if they come this way. Frankly, too, I think the notice a little limited, although that time element is something people don't seem to realize exists in the country. By the same token, people really do come here on occasion from Alexandria or Natchitoches, simply because they feel sorry for me, sitting here with nothing to do, or, perhaps because they are sitting in Alexandria or Natchitoches casting about for entertainment because they, in reality, are the ones who are bogged down with an over supply of time.

Another element in the Waco letter gave me pause, --they arrive here on Wednesday evening and they sail from New Orleans on Saturday. For all I know they may have a million dates in New Orleans prior to sailing, but since I don't know, and since they might figure on lingering here for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday until about noon, that order would be too much, since the Shreveport contingent threatened to honor us on Thursday or Friday, and I see no pleasure in trying to mix that Waco oil with the Shreveport water.

If people would only indicate the proposed length of a visit, it would be so much easier all around.

I reckon I'll receive the Volfax contingent tomorrow morning in a sea of mud, and in view of the impending convention of the Library Association in Shreveport, I have no doubt Sasae Mae, Lois Ester and Heaven knows what others will probably be passing this way on their way North. By Wednesday night, things ought to be at bang-up tempo, and I'll be glad to contemplate next week when everyone gets "put", as, of course, never will happen..

I notice a letter from Beth Mead, Dora, Nina and so on, but I'm hoping none of them contain anything suggestive of a visit. Tomorrow the two nieces of Lestan Rudhomme are coming to dine with Celeste and Adam Regard and I have received a pressing invitation to break bread with them. They are both delightful ladies and conversation will be as gay as the food is good but I have declined simply because I sense impending visitations from this one or that from South Louisiana, and it is easier to keep the docket clean and thus avoid any last minute changes of plans. --It's so good having your letter and to know everything is rocking along perfectly so far as our own comparison of notes goes, - and we can stand all the rest if we have just that....

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Tuesday, March 11th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Lots of sunshine today, and we could stand it, after all of yesterday's rain. We are promised warmer weather for the morrow -- and rain.

I got a tel gram off to Helen this morning early, recommending they stop at the hotel in Natchitoches.

Then I telephoned Ora to get an estimate as to the approximate number of pilgrims I might expect on Sunday. I was slightly taken aback to learn from her servant she had been rushed to the hospital on Sunday. Hmmm.....

My Volfax pilgrims were only an hour late in arriving. The number was augmented by what might be styled post graduates, I guess. There were perhaps 30 students and about half as many grown ups, some of the latter having been here on a historical society round a couple of years back, the Mayor of Montgomery, La., and the Lord knows what other individuals. I think the tour was successful from the guests' angle. It wasn't from the host's. If I agree to pilot a graduating class about, that is one thing, but it is something else again when other people horn in on the party. I shall receive a bread-and-butter note from the institution in a few days, I reckon. I shall reply with sarcasm, and when the next graduating class asks to be received, I shall make it explicit that I will receive the graduating class. Period.

After dinner I dropped by Celeste's to say howdy to Miss Julie and Miss Clothilde. They were as gracious as ever but puzzled because I never visit them in town.

As I headed out to get on with some gardening, - after a 15 minute chat, I noticed a car stopping at the front gate. It was Dr. and Mrs. John Kyser of the college and some kin folks from Chicago. They stated frankly the reason for their visit was two fold, --to let Chicago see what ye olde plantation looked like and to consult with me on a letter they had heard about but not read, written to a Natchitoches paper last

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December. They didn't have the details but the Mayor who also had not seen it but had heard of it had told them it covered some pertinent points regarding festivities for the home or rather featers for said festivities. While Chicago explored the gardens, I gave them a thumbnail sketch of the ideas. They seemed entranced and as they are on the Board that determines on a program, and usually puts it through the civic machine of the Town Fathers, I suppose the design will be incorporated at next week's meeting, held to determine and make appropriate plans for effecting the thing.

Dr. Kyser is for Mr. Taft and he can have him. We got little chance to gossip. The only thing of interest I heard was that Jimmie and Rosalyn Aswell were at the Kyser home last night and Jimmie said he is having difficulty ending up the manuscript of his latest novel. I gathered from one word dropped that said author has fallen off the wagon again, which perhaps increases his writing difficulties, for I believe he inclines toward being extreme, --completely soaked when off the wagon, but a rabid prohibitionist when on. I hope that they, --or at least he, doesn't honor me too soon. He seems rather more mellow when off the wagon, but simmering in sex when dry, and I've never taken the trouble to decide which state makes him more tiresome.

The enclosures speak for themselves. I never did get around to read Nina's letter or Beth's. Dora's contains an amusing episode, the like of which I hadn't heard before. The Storm card speaks for itself. From the Storm card, I take it there must be great disadvantages for rich people when tax time rolls round. If a poor beggar, starving for a crust of bread, could only imagine the mental tortures the baker has to go through in setting forth tons of steaming hot loaves.....

I believe J. H. must have gone to Chicago on the train last week end. Anyway he telephoned this morning to say he was hopping a plane and would be home tonight. I'm glad he doesn't seem to mind such infernal jaunting.

Dr. Kyser spoke of a new book by Bowes, or some such name, I reckon it's the same one Ed. Morrow mentioned the other night. I gather from the Kyser account that the book points out the current revolutionary movement isn't distributing the wealth but concentrating it in the hands of the rich. That may be, too, so many revolutions are like that, still I can't picture Mr. Taft carrying the banner for the paupers.....

Wednesday, March 12th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It was supposed to rain today, but it didn't. The promise is for showers tonight, but the sky is star-spangled

Accordingly I made the most of the weather in refurbishing some parterres and generally transplanting stuff which ought to thrive after so much rain.

One letter from Alexandria in the morning post, was resting in my armchair at 2 o'clock, awaiting the 4 o'clock appearance of my secretary when Maud Pattison and Harold Waeodon appeared. Their arrival, it seems, had been announced in the letter.

They wanted to discuss illustrations for a book on old negro servants which Maud has written recently. I believe they had another axe or two to grind, but I only took up the first one, --some roots of the Orinoco, and then after giving them a few pointers on how to approach Clemence for some paintings, sent them on their way.

Maud, a rugged individualist, was much depressed because Mr. Taft fared so badly in the "beauty contest" in New Hampshire yesterday. I expressed my sympathy for her and let it go at that. After all, one either does or doesn't favor the Ohio gentleman, and I reckon there isn't much point in starting an argument on his virtues.

We have been having supper about 6 o'clock recently, and just as I started for the big house at 5 minute after the hour, I met Helen and Lucille on the front gallery of Yucca. They had brought an enormous box of fried chicken, boiled eggs, sandwiches, cake, candy and Heaven knows what all. I thought Helen seemed a little tired and I have no doubt the cruise will be just the thing for her. Lucille's husband is meeting them when the dock on their return trip, --at Mobile, I believe, on April 4th, and I believe they plan to linger a little

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at Biloxi or some such place before heading back to Waco. Lucille tells me her husband is wild about getting over to the Cane River country for fishing just as soon as the proper time has arrived, and wants to know if he should bring a speed boat with him which he will be glad to do if it isn't convenient to obtain them here on the river. Melrose never had a speed boat and I'm not going to get the Rands to contribute one of theirs. If only Carl Harness and Holt Massey could stir up a fishing expedition jointly, operating out of Natchitoches, that would be wonderful. I frankly wouldn't dare suggest such a thing for fear both of them would jump at the suggestion and the first thing I knew I would find myself bogged down in a fishing party which I relish not at all.

The Daisey in the Dell enclosure speaks for itself. If the lady contemplates coming this way by car, it might be very convenient to be able to run through the manuscript with her and let her take it along with her if she isn't already bogged down with her old detective stories, - I hope not.

I suppose you have noticed in the press or heard on the air the comparison of the New Hampshire primary compared to a Beauty Contest in which in which three or four of the contestants strut their stuff before the jury while two of them, instead of having the advantage of the personal touch, are simply represented by pictures of themselves being carried in the parade of Beauties by their respective mamas and the killing thing about the result is that the contestant who didn't appear won first prize. I liked that bit of whimsy.

But the hour grows late, and I had better start folding my beard, for I want to do a round at Arenburg early-early before undertaking some re-arrangements of the Iris garden at Melrose before it is time for the Knipmeyers. I shall be so glad of that opportunity to explore further in the Street article which we started last week, thanks to your thoughtfulness in sending Holiday.

With tonight's guests so tired, conversation was on the dull side, but I'm glad the moon was big and round and pretty, - if made their impression of the gardens so favorable, I think, as they departed.

Beth Head
3/6
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Thursday, March 13th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The atmosphere has been odd today, - a white-ish fog seeming to prevail, although sufficiently thin to permit a vague suggestion of blue in the sky, and to permit the sun to cast a shadow, but rather faintly. The Texas panhandle dust bowl is blowing and has been for the past day, but will cease spreading it all over thing, pall, perhaps, along about tonight.

If I can find the Beth whatever her name is letter, I shall enclose it. It is interesting only because of its lack of reason for the most part. I recall her having mentioned nothing about us, for example, when she passed this way, and therefore the reference to them is completely lost on me. And the irksomeness of her relations with her companion is understandable but not precisely pertinent in such a letter, it seems to me. I find it, in fine, among the more remarkable epistles coming to hand for just the reason that it seems to be swinging at variance around anyone (any one) of a variety of subjects or moods, in none of which I am interested, although the writing having to do about Robert is well contrived, I must say.

I had such a busy morning I thought I would collapse for ten minutes or so this noon and run through the current Talking Books Topics which came to hand in record form today. But the Charles Woods came just as I sat down, heading for Lake Charles and asking if they might pick me up tomorrow on their return, and so accompany them to Natchitoches to have dinner with them. Naturally I declined. I find it takes so long to get rid of that old Virus X business with the thing "hoovering" around so long after the full fury of the business has been spent. I'm wondering if you are experiencing the same dawdling tendency on the part of the misere to eliminate itself completely.

I telephoned the R. B. Williams residence this afternoon to inquire how the lady, hospitalized on Sunday, might be making it. Picture my surprise when I discovered she

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was home from college and was just heading out to round up some groceries. How is it people collapse on Sunday and are back on all cylinders three days later.

She wanted to talk a little about the Sunday tour. She said several people from about the State who declined attending the Shreveport Library Association meeting did put in applications to visit Melrose. The idea of having a tea or supper or whatever on Sunday night has been shelved because people don't want to miss Melrose and don't want to hurry. Nobody asked me on that score. The number of people journeying this far afield will be somewhere around 100, I expect, and Essae Mae, among others, is threatening to drag some aut ors with her.

I haven't told Celeste as yet that librarians will be turning up under every new leaf in the garden on Sunday, but I think I shall advise her on the morrow that if she is going to be home on Sunday, she had better rig up her Church calendar so as to skip vespers and give me a hand in the receiving line. Celeste just loves tlaing with people and she can do just that in the big house. If the weather is fair and warm, I shall harangue the crowd in the o en under the big oak. My remarks will be mighty brief, but Dr. Watson, the founder of whatever this branch of the book section is, has asked me if I would honor them, and I shall sing them a couple of well chosen couplets and let it go at that. After all, who in the world wants to hear a lecture on Sunday evening at twilight. I think

I shall try to pin Celeste down in the big house and retreat to Yucca where I am hoping on the back gallery I can gather a few interesting people together for a little chat. I like my tours small, but if they must be large, I like them sufficiently big to be able to split up into small clusters so that at least a few kindred souls can have a go at things.

I am rather sorry I missed all the newscasts and commentators yesterday, for I should have liked to hear some of the observations on the doings in New Hampshire on Tuesday. But there will be others and others, and on end, because now and November, and I reckon I shall have had an ample ~~ex~~ opportunity to choke many an orator on such matter long ere then.....

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Lucy B. Reynolds
2/10

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Friday, March 14th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The weather continues cool and cloudless but the dust storm continues veiling the sun considerably.

I always look forward to receiving the Talking Books Topics record which came yesterday, but for some reason or other, I haven't even gotten around to run through the thing as yet. Perhaps I shall take time out tonight to do so.

We ate a little later than usual tonight and it was after sundown when I got back to Yucca where I found Beau Mack awaiting me, prepared to shear my locks a little. Accordingly I missed the Ed Morrow news cast, but having the fringe taken off the nap of my neck is the recompense for its absence will save me from the necessity of investing in a ribbon to catch up my perruque. Beau said his boy, Y. C., who failed to show up this afternoon, had gone some place to spend the night with his cousin. I didn't mind his absence, since the postman didn't wear himself toating mail pouches in my direction this morning. One of these days I shall probably get several letters all in a batch.

I made it a point to see Celeste at coffee this morning for I wanted to invite her to join me in receiving the authors and librarians on Sunday. Then, too, --and this is the selfish angle, I thought it might be nice if she would receive in the library where some of these who are old timers at Melrose might like to sit and chat while others were concentrating on the Yucca and African House sessions. She was very nice about it but said unless I wouldn't feel happy alone, she so much wanted to go to town on Sunday afternoon. It seems all her set plays cards at the Elks Club on Saturday afternoon, as they will on the morrow, but on Sunday afternoon one of the ladies is going to have a few of the girls in for bridge and she would so much hate to miss it. She said she was positive about Saturday afternoon, for that is as firmly established a custom as church, but although her

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acquaintance when she spoke about a Sunday game hadn't been positive about Sunday, still she thought it was probable and would let her know at the Elks bridge tomorrow, and if the Sunday game was on, she would so hate to miss it.

I told her I could readily appreciate her viewpoint and that I had mentioned the authors and librarians merely because I thought she might not be busy, and having nothing to do, might be amused to join us, and that I thought they would arrive late enough so she would be back from church before they got her. She said she wasn't going to church anyway, since the card game would be going on at that time.

Now if I can just get the "enks well on their way to Shreveport before the cavalcade heads in this way, everything ought to rock along merrily.

On the floral front, the present cool spell has slowed up the advance of the greenery a bit, but the more hardy Spring flowers continue unfolding their blossoms regardless. The German iris which I find so much more satisfying than the more delicate native, is doing very nicely. At Arenbourg the big deep blue Emperor of China, a rather rare item in this region, is an especial source of delight at the moment while the white and pale yellow banners are approaching their peak of perfection.

And speaking of plants, I must confess a hoax I permitted to establish itself in the mind of a friend a week or so back. Along the front gallery, amidst the banana and butterfly lilies, both of which have new growth about 8 inches in height, are scattered a number of earthenware pots in which I always grow butterfly lilies so that I may send the same to this person or that, when blossoming times rolls round in July. On Sunday when Dr. Rand was here with Luther Harrison he inquired with just a touch of asperity in his voice: "What in the world do you think is going to happen to those bananas planted in those pots there on the gallery, and can you possibly believe they are going to do any growing in such a small pot."

It is true the pot is not more than a foot across and perhaps 8 inches deep, and the soil would scarcely cover the root of the smallest banana. But I accepted the question with seeming casualness and remarked that every year I planted the same thing in them so I could move it about easily during the summer wherever the impulse impelled me to. Dr. Rand said he couldn't imagine the things growing at all. I suggested he have a look for himself in July.....

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Sunday, March 16th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It remains cool, but fair, and there were plenty of pilgrims, none of which were of primary interest.

On Saturday Essie Mae sent me a message, saying she was sorry she was forced to take the midnight train for Baton Rouge and so would miss getting to "elrose. W. D. Postell telephoned from Satchitoches this morning, saying he had to catch the 2 o'clock train for New Orleans, and so would be unable to get down. But it was pleasant to chat with him and he was hoping to contact the Lambres at Bermuda with a view to making arrangements for the summer on the Joyeous Coast, which I hope he may do.

Pat, Ben and I dined with the J. H. Henrys and the food and conversation was ever so pleasant. Sister and her crowd with a couple of guests blew in just after I had returned to Yucca. I am glad to have met their two friends whom they had explained were lovely ladies, twins, and one of them the wife of some imposing physician of Chicago. The reason I was glad to meet them because I had forgotten there are bound to be lots of people of the same type, no matter how curious the pattern, scattered around in the world and the two ladies, almost midgits, turned out to be ever so much like Sister, and it's pleasant to know she is thus acquainted with people who approximate but I am sure never equal her unique distinctions.

The librarians arrived around 4:45, - a little earlier than I had anticipated after Friend Ostelle had told me of their afternoon's schedule.

I harangued the gathering under the big oak on my or rather on their arrival. As the group was made up of people having to do with books, I began by saying

"Ladies and Gentlemen, It was on a Sunday afternoon about this time of year ~~when~~ about 8 or 10 years ago when Miss Cammie, Lyle Axon and I were returning from making a call on

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an old mulatto lady down the river when, as we came along by the Yupon hedge there by the side of the road that Lyle said:

"Listen, Aunt Cammie. Let's play you have never before set foot in the Cane River country, that this is your first visit in the neighborhood. And suppose you are right now peeping through that hedge and seeing those bushes and trees and catching a glimpse of the big house, and that by some miracle you are able to go in a prow around and see all the ante bellum plantation plunder, none of which you had never dreamed existed anywhere in Louisiana. Don't you know you would be perfectly delighted.

Said Miss Cammie: "I declare, Lyle, you're a sight. But come to think of it, I guess you're right. I believe I would relish it."

For many of you this afternoon's visit is your original. I'm going to be through talking in a minute or two, and then I hope you are going to enjoy whatever prowling you feel inclined to do, but before you start out, Mrs. Williams has suggested that a brief thumbnail sketch of the history of the place might make your discoveries a little more comprehensible, and so I shall give you a couple of salient features and then you will be on your own.

Then I did the Marie Therese founding and the Cammie G. restoration, and then ended with these words:

"One more thought, and I am done. It seems to me when a person dies, you may say he is really dead only after all those influences, either for good or evil, he has set in motion during his lifetime, cease to effect or influence a living soul. The fact that we all find ourselves here today on our own volition seems proof positive that the spirit Miss Cammie engendered at Celrose is still a vital force. Were it only possible for those gone on before to communicate with those of us who remain, I haven't a doubt, Miss Cammie in some heavenlier sphere, would pause, and turning back, say:

"Francois, there are about a million librarians loose in the Cane River country this afternoon. For my sake, wout you and Ora bid them welcome to Celrose."

"And Lo! -- Ora and I do."

And so the tour began, and it seemed to pan out alright, and long shadows were aslant the gardens before the pilgrims had departed. Celeste arrived just as the people were heading toward the front gate and it was nice she was able to say good-bye.

Beahrice Cairns

Robina 3/13

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Monday, March 17th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Here it is St. Patrick's birthday and the wedding anniversary of Madam Roosevelt, and the 17th of March always suggests the advent of Spring in Manhattan, although often it turns out to be but a promise.

Locally rain clouds have hung low over the countryside all day, and tonight there's an occasional thin sprinkle with tender showers promised for tomorrow. Within the past 24 hours, Colorado, usually one of the colder spots in the country has been enjoying thermometer readings 6 to 8 points higher than anything Louisiana can boast of. If summer doesn't seep in from the South this year perhaps it will come sliding down from the Northern Rockies.

I put aside gardening activities for a breathing spell this afternoon when Keith Couragere came by to see me. He married Celeste's former sister-in-law, you may recall, and lives in New Iberia. He says he hasn't seen Weeks in a couple of days but talked with him on the telephone this morning. He says his milk leg is bothering him, although he is able to get about and although his broken back requires a brace, and will for a while longer, he gets around alright by moving slowly. I remarked that it was a miracle he was n't killed by the fall. He said he probably would have been, had he been quite sober. He says he hopes he doesn't take another tumble before he gets back off the water wagon, on which he is currently riding with grim determination.

I was glad to see the Dark Duke and his brother today. The latter's ear is about healed (with an s, I hope). They came to ask me to contact the lady doctor for their sister who lives here on the place. I did, and later saw said physician for a moment. The patient, it seems, has had pneumonia for several days, and had a miscarriage this morning. Like Weeks, she seems to go in for odd

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combinations, but I hope she is as successful in
overcoming her afflictions as he seems to be with his.

I got around to read precisely nothing last night,
and shall probably accomplish about as much tonight. The truth
is, probably, that I don't seem to have anything of sufficient
interest to excite my attention to the point of driving
off the sandman. Then, too, winds of 25 to 30 miles an
hour have blown nearly all day, and I have always felt, --
or imagined, that exposure to a steady breeze makes one
sleepy, although, for the life of me, I can think of no
particular reason as to why this should be so, and it
probably is simply my imagination.

I think there is nothing of particular interest in
the enclosures but I send them along regardless.

One letter not enclosed, being held for interpretation of
the name, is addressed to "Mrs. Henry, Natchitoches". It
and comes from some old acquaintance up Oklahoma way. It
seems odd that since last Monday, four different letters,
addressed to the Madam, have come to hand in contrast to
the preceding 51 weeks or more in which nothing of the
sort have trickled in. One might assume some news item
might have recalled her name to people to impell people in
Florida, Oklahoma, Ohio and California, all to take pen in
hand within a space of hours, but so far as I know, nothing
of the sort has appeared.

An idea which has long been buzzing around in my
brain seems to be manifesting itself with renewed vigor of
late. The whole thing is based on the assumption that
a Radio Digest might turn out to be as popular as a Reader's
Digest and that two or three powerful stations, - say
50,000 watts, on the East Coast, the Middle West and
perhaps the West Coast, should devote all their broadcasting
time should be devoted exclusively to re-broadcasting the
most interesting programs, regardless of the system on
which these various programs originate. My thought is that
quarter, half or full hour programs could be devoted to
a fairly high standard of programs, and include all
phases of news reporting, symposiums on every subject
by experts and amateurs, the arts, the theatre, sports,
politics, medicine, science and so on. The thing might have to
be with a sponsor, such as the Federal Educational Bureau,
or some private educational organization, such as the Laura
Spellman Rockefeller Foundation. I think there are enough
intelligent people in the country to make a substantial
audience so that advertising might eventually be attracted
and so carry the costs. I shall ask A. Carter what he thinks....

Letter to Mrs. Henry
2/17/52

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Tuesday, March 18th, 1952.

Memorandum:

High winds and much rain, or at least a couple of inches,
started in about 3 this morning. The rain stopped by daylight
and the sun came out before noon, but the winds kept right on
going until sundown. The earth can absorb the water readily
enough, and whatever runs off will go to bring back the
former level of Cane River to its former height, and I like
that, too.

I can't remember having spent so much time fiddling
about as I did today, a flock of little odds and ends
that have long needed attention but were put off while
bigger strides were being attempted.

The intemperate weather made the bird bar unusually
popular and a mama cedar waxwing with three offspring
didn't even fly away when I approached the bar to re-stock it.
I didn't know cedar waxwings were begetting offspring at this
time of year, but so it seems to be.

Some snapshots Eugene took of various magnolia ~~tree~~
trees (Chinese) in full flower about a month ago came
back from the printers today. I gather such work requires
some technical attention, for while the sky came out
beautifully blue, the grass green and so on, the various
explosions of pinks, whites and purples all presented
themselves as mere dull gray splotches. Perhaps the waxy
finish of the petals demand a light filter or some such
to get their colors recorded. I must ask Carolyn or Helen
when next they pass this way.

By dint of some effort, I did succeed in finishing
"Life on a Mediaval Barony", and perhaps I kept awake the
easier because I found the final chapter, having to do

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with the organization and operation of the Church in 1200 to be rather more interesting and less padded than some of the other chapters. While the account of the secular life of the times was informative, as regards the reason for so many fortified castles being spread all over Europe, the thing about the Cathedrals will always have an added claim to the imagination since there is bound to be a miracle in some way associated with the building of the Cathedrals. The author, having selected the year 1220, around which he painted his picture of rural and urban life of the mediaval period, this brought him slap at the germinating season of the Cathedrals, - as for example, Rheims, which, if memory serves, was started about 1213, with most of the other notable ones between the Seine and the Rhine beginning to come into flower at about the same time, Notre Dame de Paris, perhaps, in 1163 or some such, and so on. As all of them were about a hundred years in the building, I reckon there must have been several generations who carried out the original plans and modified the original concepts as the time and work proceeded. Father Walsh in his "Eleventh, the Greatest of Centuries" stresses the fact if I recall correctly, that many of these great edifices were the handiwork of local effort in a restricted area, while Davis, the author of the present work, says something about roving bands of workmen who would come to a little town for employment and remain for years or a life time. I think it would be interesting to know the approximate number of inhabitants of some of the communities where and at the time some of the more remarkable Cathedrals were built. Without ever having gone into the matter at all, I assume Paris probably had quite a sizeable number of inhabitants in 1200 whereas I imagine Chartres had comparatively few people. Rheims seems always to have been a trade center, as between Eastern Europe and the Orient and the West, and I believe Rheims was, for example, the trade center for eunuchs, supplied by the Turks, and purchased by the Catholic Church in creating and maintaining their remarkable choirs. As buildings go, I must say I shall forever prefer the classic Greek to the Gothic, what with the Greek being possessed of such wonderful simple majesty, and it is arresting to think what the 1200 century might have built in size, had it gone along on Greek lines, for I suppose its Cathedrals would have approximated the size and general lines of the vast concourse in the Pennsylvania Station. Well, "ord, "ord, here I have talked myself to the bottom of the page and said nothing. Perhaps I'll do better tomorrow....

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Reminders 3/15

Wednesday, March 19th, 1952.

Memorandum:

An all blue and gold day with the thermometer in the mid 80's, and the promise for the same thing on the morrow. This ought to set things to going again after the dawdling about which has resulted from the cool days and especially the nights of late.

After making a round at Arenbourg early, I spent the balance of the daylight hours on and about this domain. Celeste expressed the desire to have a few native iris, and as I had in mind moving some stuff a little later in the iris garden, it seemed to me no time like the present to have a go at that job. Picking up native iris and sticking them in the ground isn't much of a job, but the magical section behind her house which she had in mind was a tangle of weeds and a hodge-podge of bamboo roots which require physical energy almost akin to dynamite to blast them out of the ground. But I had Andy to give me a hand, and so we got things transformed before the ladies across the road headed down the road for an afternoon frolic.

While I was still up to my hips in the iris, however, the lady doctor dropped in to say howdy for a few minutes. She had been to see Peter's sister and said, to her astonishment poor Janie is not only living but seems to be improving. I think I mentioned she had pneumonia and a miscarriage all on the same go-round, and I also learned that the pneumonia was double and Janie was up and doing her housework and caring for her several children until the miscarriage flattened her out. Janie is a frail girl but apparently one who can take lots. I was also glad to hear a professional opinion regarding Paynie's health which seems to be very poor, --high blood pressure that is alarming but that will not kill him, but a kidney disturbance that probably will. His wife who has been tried to pieces by years of her husband's demands on all

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her time, --he doesn't like to be alone even at bed time and so she has been forced to extinguish her bed light when he wants to go to sleep, although she loves to read, --such little nagging business which must be wearing on a year-in, year-out basis.

No sooner had the lady doc or gone than Mrs. George Sutton and some lady passed this way, bringing me a fine looking cake which I shall carve later tonight if I get hungry. I gave each secretary a slab and already I have some idea as to its goodness by the way their eyes rolled. Mrs. Sutton said there is another bit of a stir regarding the Bachelier-Becker business, with the Sutton lawyers urging them to pass for whatever the original Becker charges consisted in open court. Today, for the first time, I heard the phrase, --"the property Mr. Bachelier gave us", --which undoubtedly accounts for the 200 dollar gift that so unexpectedly was presented to me by the Suttons following Mr. Bachelier's death. The Hatchitoches property had been mentioned at the time, but never as "the property Mrs. Bachelier gave us". Actually, of course, a bill of sale was executed but no money was paid by the Suttons, and as the whole thing was transacted but a day or two before Father Becker put over the new will, it is doubtful in my mind if Mr. Bachelier was quite possessed of all his senses when the first paper was put through and everybody knows he wasn't when the second one was.

Mr. Aldrich of the Health Department appeared before the Sutton department quitted the place. The guests knew each other and so that made their brief visit pleasant, and I felt free to leave them to their own devices for a moment while I took another pass at gardening.

This was one of those rare days in the post office wherein the 1st class stuff amounted to nothing, save a flock of post cards of no interest and a batch of catalogues without the virtue of attractive layouts. Tomorrow or the next day will probably see a bumper crop of letters, a portion of which, I fear, inspired by the advent of Spring, will be asking for tours, and they will have to be more appealing than some recently coming to hand or the answer will be on the negative side.

And now for a little concert, and so to bed.....

3366

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Mrs. Williams 3/
Walter W. Brandt 4

Thursday, March 20th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The weather man announced the advent of Spring, which was said to arrive at 10:14 this morning. I heard no jolt when it crashed in. A cloudless day with gentle breezes and the thermometer touching 90 gave the impression of full summer.

As I anticipated, the postman was too generous with his 1st class stuff today, and it seemed as though every other letter presented a minor problem. For instance, Clarence Laughlin wants to make a round which pleases me not at all, and little Miss Alberta apparently wants to come but that involves a matter of "sleeping" her, and this in spite of all her bolts and barricades. And somebody else wants something or other, and I think I shall shelve the whole business until the week end. Perhaps I shall feel more inspired to do something about settling a few such matters then.

You will regret the news carried by the enclosed clipping. Perhaps it has already reached your true hand through metropolitan papers, although I'm not sure Manhattan papers would bother about this final phase of Louisiana's most magnificent ante bellum home. I'm glad I often visited the place and that I had the privilege of listening to Lyle expiate on its glories by the hour, since both his mother before him and later Lyle himself used to go there when it was in its heyday. It is good, too, that the Louisiana Guide carries such striking photographs of the place, for through that medium the illustrations, photographed after the house had been forsaken, will remain as a permanent record of this heroic mansion. The passing of Belle Grove is almost like the passing of an era, but I reckon in spite of the interior being gutted, the great columns will remain, and possibly the pediment, and surely somebody with a few pennies ought to make a lovely park to spread about this remarkable souvenir of a by-gone age.

The pilgrims were fairly numerous today, with a Mrs. Waldo Norris of Jacksonville making the most impression on me. She had charm, which seems to be quite a rare attribute, so far as pilgrims go, and what was even more astonishing, she

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had a personality that seemed, - since comparison with the original was impossible, that perfectly reflected that of Roane. To see the two ladies together would be a miracle or a disaster, and I know not which, for sometimes something resembling something else does so only when the two are not brought into proximity.

I read a couple of pages last night from "The Letters to Hiss Children" by Theodore Roosevelt. I was astonished to find Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. reading them, and throwing in an occasional comment as to the identity of this person or that. It was amusing to me that he remarked that the family never called Alice by her name, but rather she was known to them all as Sister. Shades of little Cammie.

I have seen Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., but a few times in my life, two or three times as rather large teas and once or twice on the platform. Both in personal contact and as a member of a large audience, I always felt shame-faced for him whenever he opened his mouth, and physically, it was large. I felt embarrassed for him the way one feels embarrassed for children when they are acting smart and don't know what fools they are making of themselves and how humiliated the members of their family must feel. T. R. Jr. apparently suffered from thinking he was something special because he was the son of his energetic papa, but his manner of speaking, so positive and declamatory, and his outlandish gestures set off an automatic feeling of resentment on the part of everyone within ear-shot or sight of him. If Alexander Scourby is about everything one wants in a reader's voice, T. R. Jr. is the antithesis of the same and by some miracle manages to make the listener pitch out the record with every phrase the man utters. It's a triumph in all that shouldn't be on Talking Books, and I'm glad to have had such a sample.

I find myself, after all this talk about the T. R.'s, wondering whatever happened to Pauline Longworth, "Sister's" daughter. She must be a big girl now and for all I know may be a grandmother.

I am wondering if you ever see her name in the papers, and while this is simply idle curiosity on my part, I must say that during the past few years I have been impressed by everyone's ignorance of the child and whatever happened to her.

Poor Madam Marco, I must send along her latest letters. What a noble soul and what an existence. I could chuck sister Suzzie who ought to be standing on her head trying to entertain poor Miss Nellie and not making life harder by her own complaints. I must write the lady a letter forthwith, don't you think so.....

C. Laughlin 3/17
Weeks Hall 3/17
Carolyn Ramsay 3/17

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Friday, March 21st, 1952.

Memorandum:

Cloudy, with a spanking breeze all day, with a promise of a rain tonight and cooler weather on the morrow. How nice it is will only discourage pilgrims.

In the post leaving on Saturday, the 22nd, a square-ish package will go forward by parcel post. I learned today the clerk might be late next Monday, not arriving before posting time, which would put the package off until Tuesday, which would make it a bit late, I fear, in reaching your true hand on your natal day. Hence tomorrow's shipment which may arrive a little prematurely, but I trust you will not mind.

For your convenience, I have wrapped up a rather thin package in blue paper, tied up for easy transporting under one's arm, and the square box has been employed, stuffed with waste paper, simply to save the inside package from getting jammed up in transit. You may accordingly just toss the square box, together with its several waddings of newspapers into the nearest convenient trash can, resting assured that the couple of items being sent are enclosed in the inner package, wrapped in the blue paper.

There's a book inside the blue wrapped package. I hurriedly put a paper jacket over it, as my name appears just inside the cover of the book itself. I suggest that you either scratch out the name or paste a bit of white paper over it, as you please, and which ever is convenient. Then the cover can be cast aside.

Forgive me for not having made better arrangements but I was a little pressed for time when belatedly I learned that their mi(there might) be no out-going 2nd class mail on Monday, -- hence the rush.

Of the enclosures, either herewith or under separate cover, there isn't much of great interest, although I pass them along regardless. The letter from Mr. Laughlin seems to be characteristically stupid of that gentleman. I take it the reference to J. A. may be in the nature of a veiled threat to go over my head. I have responded promptly, saying

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it was kind of him to advise me that J. A. had expressed willingness that he should make his initial visit at any time, and stressing my appreciation of his generosity in promising to give me a glance at his photographs of "elrose" which I had already made it possible for him to take, and the captions of which I had given him outright. I further stated that my calendar for the present season prevented me from seeing him, but since he mentioned J. A., and that I knew he had been the house guest of another member of the family, while in Shreveport earlier in the year, I had no doubt that he could get ample information concerning the historical aspects of "elrose" directly from either of those sources. The killing part of it is that he will have the nerve to pass this way regardless, and I have left instructions with the clerk that I am not to be contacted if he does put in an appearance.

I'm tired of Mr. Laughlin and he might as well find it out now as any other time.

Weeks card is rather pitiful, it seems to me, and I must dash him off a note forthwith.

As for little Miss Alberta I shall try to see what I can do for her by way of protection. It would be nice if she and Carolyn could arrange to be here at the same time, but long ago I learned to count on seeing Carolyn when she appeared and to make no plans whatsoever in advance, but I reckon I'll figure out some way or other. It's so odd that little Miss Alberta should even consider coming at a time when sister is here but Ayle always declared little Miss A. never comprehended the slightest manifestation of that odd personality, and never seemed to realize it was any different from that of her mother's.

In today's gardening, I was perfectly delighted to have a couple negroes whose aboriginal speech as unexpected as their unconventional as their horticultural concepts. For example, I was entranced when one of them clipped off the first letter in the word "truck" to make the past tense of a verb. He said:

"This here round where us-es been a-diggin' sure am humpy. I'll go fetch that there rake 'cause it sure ought to be ruck and ruck good."

At the turn of this page, a bolt of lightning knocked out the electric current, and so with radio and reading machine on vacation, I shall fold forthwith and sleep....

Alberta Kinsey
5372

3/16
Last letter
(in separate
file)

Sunday, March 23rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your grand letter in Saturday's post, dating from the day of St. Patrick and the following.

I need scarcely add my week end has been perfect as a result,-- all around the inner most recesses of my heart.

And how kind of you to think to send me particulars about various things I had inquired. It is so satisfying to get the Canastota wagons straightened out, along with the branle and the like.

And while I think of it, may I tell you that I am delighted you found Pettosporum to your liking. I like it, too. We had a fine bush at Arenbourg for your delectation until that famous raid of the bovine section some time back when so many things were ruined. But we are to have another one, now that the fences have been fixed, and I think it will do very nicely. I was rather successful with the first one which I acquired at a reasonable price because it was so large and because the owner thought I couldn't move it successfully. I guess it was about ten feet in height, but it transplanted nicely and was flourishing with abandon until ravaged and rined by the intruders. I'm so glad you mentioned your liking for this item, for it will give me ten times more pleasure to fiddle with it on the next go-round, knowing of your interest. I believe it is too late to get another this year, but we shall have one when the time comes and eventually we shall both enjoy it, don't you think so.

The otorrential rains and high winds tended to discourage some road running, but even so I got a trio of pilgrims on Saturday that were difficult enough. On Saturday morning about 10, J. H. sent a servant to me, saying there was someone in the store whom he couldn't understand, and I wondered what language was being spoken, since Eugene speaks French. But before I got half way across the garden, I met J. A. with the people, and he introduced me with a measure of cordiality that belied his hasty retreat. It turned out they were second or third cousins from South Louisiana whom he had never seen before. They were charming in a way, but as they had no palates, it was a little difficult answering questions, put in the form of strange noises, they put to me.

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Like you, I, too, am sometimes amazed at the Harper Bazaar failure to appreciate values. It is one of those elements of a kindly character which probably impells me to be a little unjust at times. But in view of the faulty recognition of what is worth while and what isn't, it is no wonder, as you observe, that things tend to get so out of joint. I suppose it is rather surprising the friendship that has always obtained and seems almost desperately genuine, should, indeed, exist at all, and sometimes I find myself thinking I had better re-read a life of Benjamin Franklin and how he navigated at Court circles with such fulsome backing of wives of the great who certainly, for the most part, must have found something in him aside from his interest in everything for which they care little and understood nothing.

All this afternoon I have been bogged down with people, some known and some unknown. I had a flock of college people when an Henry brought a gal to see the place. When affable he is most certainly high, otherwise he is more difficult than his sister, but things went along nicely.

The Wenks, by the way, were here for dinner. Ben had gone somewhere for the week end and Pat, smart boy, dined across the fence, leaving me the whole posse on my lap. It was a hubbub but not tinged with fire water. Celeste invites me to dinner across the fence but it seems easier to dine with the hoydens, and thus keep an explosion from developing as between the sisters-in-law, and as Sister never goes there, or at least hasn't in a couple of months, it is just as well that I anchor her on this side of the fence.

Among the late afternoon visitors was Mary Gunn from Magnolia, Miss Sally's granddaughter who goes to college in town. She's a sweet child and I liked her two girls friends she had brought to the country for the week end. Frequently they get up this way, --the Magnolia people, and usually to call on Celeste but Mary usually comes to pay me a little round and I'm always amused to hear their viewpoints, especially on college, which tends to present such a different angle from that passed along by Dr. Kyser or Dr. Coombs or Dr. Sarah Clapp. Later, after they had gone, Celeste came over to ask me for supper and I accepted, - chicken gumbo, mulatto made, at St. Augustin's Church, and this brings me to folding up time and herewith I make the most of it....

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Monday, March 24th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so the long distance operator said Lafayette was calling, and the Lafayette operator said the President of Southwestern was calling, and so I eventually established contact with Dr. Joel Fletcher. He wanted to tell me Hodding Carter's schedule was in a tangle, as for Saturday, March 29th, but wondered if he might come to see me on Friday, the 28th, instead. And allowed as how I bet he could and that was that.

And then I called Dr. Sarah Clapp of Northwestern and told her that the March 29th date I had refused her might eventually be effected, regardless, but then she said as how her calendar was in an uproar, and so we agreed on a Tuesday, and I didn't bother to ask if it might be tomorrow or a week hence, and it doesn't matter in the slightest which way.

I am pleased to report cloudless weather and the cold abating a little, although it was about 32 last night, which was low enough to discourage much rapid growth in the vegetation section, but a brilliant sun today has warmed things a little and given vast encouragement, I am sure, to the greenery. I was delighted today to discover a trumpet vine in flower. This is the earliest I remember such a manifestation of deep summer in March.

I was delighted to find three excellent young persimmons this morning, while giving a once-over of the bulb garden behind the weaving house. They were growing under the ancient persimmon tree which produces the large, sheep-nose shaped persimmons with which you are familiar, I believe. They were 4 or 5 feet in height and I immediately set to work digging them up and found they had excellent root systems. I covered them up again and along about 5:30 in the morning, I shall give them a favorable new residence at Arenbourg and will be impatient until they have brought forth fruit, perhaps in a year or so, for I am not certain persimmons grow true to seed. It is possible, of course, they may not have sprung from the tree

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under which they were growing, for there are other persimmons in the bulb garden, but the assumption that they are seem logical. Nobody seems to know much about the folk ways of persimmons, although everybody knows persimmons, which seems to put them in a class with grandiflora magnolias about which everyone knows much and nothing exists in print regarding details. Most fruit trees, I believe, bring forth the like trees from the seed of their fruit, I believe, but I'm not sure about all types in this respect. I have probably remarked before that in the floral department, the crepe myrtle may usually be counted upon to bring forth a different colored flower from the shade producing the seed that is planted in a vain hope to produce trees of identical color. Old Miss Leudivine kept what I thought was a fascinating note book on her experiments with plants, and there was endless details in it about the various colors of crepe myrtles and the strange variations that came into being after she had most carefully selected seeds of definite hues which in dozens of experiments, never brought forth new plants that approximated the coloring of the parent plants. She came to the natural conclusion that the only way to be certain that a new plants, secured from the parent that would precisely reproduce its paternal coloring, was to start the new offspring from cuttings and not from seed. Parenthetically, the "adam kept this book in her armoire and treasured it mightily for it contained not only the results of Miss Leudivine's Melrose experiments made when she was in her late 70's and early 80's, and even into her 90's, but also included a flock of data concerning her mother's planting in the 1850's, along with the names of salesmen and the houses they represented, --salesmen from France who traveled throughout the South yearly to visit their regular customers, --some nurseries in places like Mobile, New Orleans, "atchez, and so on, but even more especially the plantations famous for their extensive gardens. I suppose there was no other book like this one, and few keepers of such data could have vied with Miss Leudivine in the span of their years from 1840 to 1935. I am sorry to relate that when the General's wife, "aynie's wife and Dan supervised the "clean-up" of the armoirs, on the day following the Madam's funeral, Miss Leudivine's flower books were cast into the flames, without anybody taking the trouble to discover if these enteries of three quarters of a century were of interest to anyone.

Well, that seems to be a depressing enough note to end up on, but perhaps the new persimmons at Arenbourg will offer a measure of solace in the splendor of their coloring and characteristics.....

Mrs. Norris 3/22
Cecilia 3/22
5376

Tuesday, March 25th, 1952.

Memorandum:

As I figure it, - and one is never certain of just what the tempo of the mails may be, this letter ought to reach your true hand on or about the natal day of little Miss Lee.

I think one of the nicest things about a birthday is the fact that it doesn't fall slap on a single one of the 365 days or the year, or even on one of the 366, but rather, like the spirit of Christmas, seems to make itself manifest throughout a flock of days, both before and after. I hope this may be especially so in the case of little Miss Lee, and particularly this year when so many days have been weighted down with so many non-gala elements.

I am so glad that this year the actual day for celebration is scheduled to fall on a week end, thus enabling a little breathing space if not precisely much time for relaxation.

And while I have recognized, as in a sentence or two above that the year about to terminate hasn't been exclusively filled with unalloyed joys, still I have a feeling that if the year's sum of joys and lack of them could be broken down into a balance sheet of assets and liabilities, little Miss Lee, in striking a balance, would discover that because she has radiated so much sunshine for others, not even the most annoying clouds could darken her horizon for long.

Since happiness dispensed for others has a way of silvering the lining of the clouds that have sometimes tended to darken one's own immediate surroundings. How bright, for instance, has been my own life during the past twelfth month, thanks to just one individual, and if I were given one wish to express for that individual's birthday, I would have covered everything in saying I wish that birthday might catch a reflection of that joy, as from dawn to dusk on that natal day, - and then I would be a sure it was among the happier days of a life time.

And if the weather will only be pleasant and

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not unlike that obtaining here today, the all blue and gold pattern will be just as those who love Miss Lee would want. Now pleasant it is going to be between now and the week end, "holding the thought" in a dozen different directions and hoping that everyone of them will come true to unite in making the day splendid throughout.

It has been a quiet day on the home front, - a little gardening at Arenbourg to set out persimons and things, and a bit of digging about in putting some new frills on the well tailored Gardener's Garter Garden, which is beginning to brigh forth its contours and radiate a suggestion of order and colorful contrasts that will perhaps be modestly soul-satisfying when the major ingredients have attained more maturity within another couple of weeks. The white lilies certain the parterre are already budded and the canas beyond the slashes of the broken U are climbing steadily, while the Gardener's garter itself, is deliciously snowy white in a smooth surfaced sea of green.

Pilgrims from Dallas, via Natchez, came to disturb my horticultu (horticultu al) pursuits this afternoon. They explained that a couple of months ago they had read two articles in the Dallas paper by a "r. Carber, and it was so good they had felt impelled to drive 40 miles out of their way to visit Melrose, after Natchez, on their way back home. "Mr." Carber is going to like that report, don't you think so.

Did I mention I am reading "Miracle at Carville" by Miss Martin, - a Doubleday publication of a while back, and subsequently appearing in condensed form, I believe, in the Reader's Digest. It is a well written book. I haven't gone far but have already bumped into several names that have intrigued me, such as that of the first doctor, Dr. Leonard Wailes of New Orleans. I am under the impression that gentleman might be Miss Nellie's cousin for she had an uncle, I believe, who was a New Orleans physician and it doesn't seem likely there would have been more than half a dozen Dr. Leonard Waileses unrelated but living in the Crescent City all at the same time.

The enclosures are nothing special - to Genla I shall 20 only and 2 o'clock on Sunday, April 6th, if desired, and to Mrs. Morris who reminded me of Rowan, I shall say Thanks.....and to Miss Lee I shall say Happy Birthday.....

5378

Dora 8/10

5378

Wednesday, March 26th, 1952.

Memorandum:

One of those hurly burly days in which a lot of tag ends were gathered together, but nothing very satisfactory because nothing vast was undertaken.

About this time of year, I frequently find myself at dawning suddenly falling heir to a flock of workmen I don't want. J. A. sends them because they have to be given something to do and it is too early to put them in the field and much easier to send them back behind the bushes. As none of them has the vaguest notion as to what might be a weed and what a carefully nursed plant, it is folly to turn them loose and sometimes impossible because of other commitments, to stay with them. Today was a case in point, - two power mower operators, three who might be used for tidying up some of the houses although one of those, if turned loose, would have emptied the inside of the place, and five stalwart field hands who might do ditch digging but wouldn't be so hot at weeding amaryllis.

Then tere were appointments for morning and afternoon, and Ed Rand coming for dinner and a couple of unexpcted guests, and so the day played out.

Added to my own distraction was the loss of a letter. Last evening I asked my secretary to dictate the address of Mrs. Morris of Jacksonville, and in one of them, -- before writing the second envelope, in which I intended sending a couple of photographs, I inserted the letter I had already written before the secretary had arrived. This morning I found both envelopes, - the one with the photos in it, all nicely sealed, and the other which never had been sealed, and nothing whatsoever to be found of the letter. It seems curious to me how things like that can happen, but at least it hadn't gone out of the house, wh ch is one thing I am grateful for. I thought this circumstances furnished a good excuse for a thorough housecleaning, on the grounds I would find the lost item, but I never did, but the reco pssse may be found, I suppose, in the re-freshened domicile, but I'm still annoyed every time I puzzle over the thing.

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The ladies next door were in Alexandria today, and in consequence I saw J. A. at dinner. He says the S. G. Henrys, pere et fils, are coming for a brief stop over this week end. I'm glad they are making it now and not waiting for Easter, for I reckon there will ample doings a couple of weeks hence without too much family being present to gum up the works.

I think I mentioned "Miracle at Carville" recently. The author made a point that seems to knock a flock of old concepts completely out regarding leprosy. Miss Martin says the failure of the patient to assimilate sufficient calcium causes the bones to suffer in consequence, which causes a shortening of finger bones, for example, but that untrue are all the thousand age old stories about the leper having a finger drop off at the joint. As I read this book I find myself wondering why people have always been in such a panic about the disease, since it seems it isn't very communicable and people suffering from it apparently may live quite as active lives as other people with average health. Perhaps this is because from Biblical times the ailment has been paraded as the most dreaded of all afflictions and thus has taken on a horror in the public mind that really exceeds its lamentable potentials.

This matter leads me to consider the weekly report of Korean casualties. I believe these figures include all accidents, including those occurring inside the camps and not exclusively on the battle field. I don't know the number of people in the armed forces in Korea, but I think it would be interesting when the weekly Korean casualties are given, to follow the same with a statement of casualties in the United States, or some section of the country. The parallel might be interesting. Station W H U, Des Moines, gives the total number of people killed in automobile accidents each day, giving the number killed from the first of each year. If memory serves, I believe somewhere between 400 and 500 are killed within 365 days in Iowa. Life expectancy on the battle line could scarcely be expected to compare favorably with civilian figures, but even so, the Korean totals wouldn't seem quite so impressive, I think, if placed along side tables from the domestic hazards.

I'm missing Ed. Morrow these evenings but in a couple of weeks he will be turning up with particulars that will seem to have compensated his absence.....

1888

Mrs. Storm 3/21
Earl Brew 3/23
Lucille (card)
Joel Fletcher 3/24

5380

Thursday, March 27th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Thirty million ways of putting it would never tell you my surprise and delight when, contrary to my expectation that we were heading into little Miss Lee's birthday, it turned out, thanks to the morning post, that it was Arenbourg's and mine instead.

Your letter of the 22nd was wonderful and I cannot tell you how surprised and delighted Arenbourg and I are to find Cavallaro and Lehar and the great big birthday portraits of Mr. Hamilton, all rolled into one modestly proportioned package, the latter with all contents coming to hand in perfect order. Now am I to say thanks for so much happiness, and all in a single day.

From 6 a.m. until now, -- 8:30, -- I have been on the jump. I wanted to do a couple of things at Arenbourg early-early, but had to return rather sooner than I should have preferred since I received a note saying eight pair of strong arms and soft heads were awaiting me on my gallery, wanting to be told what to do at gardening. I stuck with them until the Knipmeyers came. Pilgrims impinged upon our sitting, then dinner and more strong arms and soft heads and more pilgrims until Y. C. arrived and I could commune a bit with you. Then more pilgrims and supper, -- late-late, and I cannot restrain myself from saying I am amazed at my self control in resisting the impulse to revel in the Rogers and Hammerstein and the Cavallaro disks. But I know perfectly well if I ever collapse for that utter bliss, I shall never get around to chat with you, and that is what I want more than anything. And afterward picture me as completely sunk in one of the happiest musicales of the year.

It was so nice of you to say you are enjoying a romp through Leston's 1940 Journal. I laughed about Mrs. Fank Percy's remark about the Greenwood reflecting pool. I had completely forgotten that morsel.

5381

0882

And how kind of you to keep me advised regarding the doings of a flock of people, and the demise of one, - the Duncan Elliott presence in the sound film, the death of Jacques Danielson and so on. Yes, Fanny Hurst and her husband lived at Hotel es Artiste when I knew them, when the Frank Dufonds and Robert and Bessie Potter Vonnoh lived there, and I had heard nothing about an occasion for an obituary. How indebted I am to you for keeping me abreast of things.

But the best news of all was the breather reported enabling you to have a go and one thing or another, which undoubtedly served almost as a true vacation. And I guess you will need one, what with the impending festivities of the natal day celebration and the chance that there may be an Easter wedding in the immediate neighborhood. It all sounds as though one dust bowl doesn't cease to blow before another begins.

It looks to me as though I am about to have one, although of a different sort than I had anticipated. The enclosed note from Dr. Fletcher means nothing, since a telephone this morning from him advised that "oddly" Carter had been forced to cancel his visit because of illness in his family. But I especially invite your attention to the unrevealing note from la Storm. I think I have figured that one out very neatly. This afternoon when I should have been heading out for supper, who appeared at my door but little Miss Lillian Tricell, her daughter and a Mrs. Williams. They stopped off for a chat on their way south to the 1952 conclave of the Matvie Iris Society. We had a nice chat. Lillian opined that Blythe would be among those present, and Miss Myra and so on. I said: "And of course the sisters Dornon", and Lillian said "No. We stopped at Briarwood, and ole Virginia is just back from a throat check up and they said some old woman was arriving on the 28th at Briarwood and so they wouldn't be able to go south". From that, do you deduce, as do I, that a storm may be expected just in the offing. Hummmmmmm.

So things whiz and so runs out my day. And thanks be to God for today's post which brought so many different manifestations of the more precious symbols of all that radiates from Lyme. And praises be that you have put down your foot about the situation in the "cave of the winds". I have a feeling you will get what you want by way of situation, and I'm so glad you are giving thought to your good health first.

What a happy birthday is Arenbourgs and mine. Now for a measure of telepathy through the medium of the disks.....

5382

E.W. Moore

5382

Friday, March 28th, 1952.

Memorandum:

What a lovely musicale I experienced last night. Naturally, it took place on the back gallery, with only the tapers from the Chapelto give a soft glow in such perfect harmony with the Lehar and the Roger compositions. Die Frau, as though sensing something was astir, had quitted the front gallery for the white garden and before I had the disks turning, was perched on the edge of St. Giggins Fountain, the candle light sometimes glinting in her eyes and faintly shimmering on the new waxey leaves of the water hyacinthes. I sat in the chair in which you photographed me. I had brought my little old duck, Yucca, with me, and it rested on the arm of the chair, -- a couple of coke bottles on the mill stone base, and a pack of cigarettes along side.

The evening was perfect for relaxation. No breeze was stirring, and the overcast sky seemed to lend an added note of intimacy. I played the Cavallero rendition first, -- both sides, and was delighted and Die Frau sat perfectly still, save for turning her head from the direction of the Blessed Martin back to me now and then.

And then I moved on to the Lehar section, entranced with all the old familiar melodies and Thankful to God for all the happiness and peace flowing from Lyme to me, and, secretly hoping some of it was flowing back. About half through the other side of the Lehar record a little cotton tail poked his nose up over the Giant's head, edging the gallery, and a couple of moments later a second. Die Frau, in the mean time, apparently finding the iron basin a little hard, had deserted it in favor of my lap, and although it was she who sighted the rabbits first, for her head, turning quickly in their direction, inclined me to glance that way, but she made no move to join them, even as they gained more courage, and began frisking about in front of the gallery, and back and forth as far as the sun dial. It was such a pleasant evening to inaugurate

5383

Arenbourg's birthday and mine, and after I had extinguished the candles and come inside, vaguely having in mind doing some mail, I found the peace so heavenly, I simply folded up my beard and didn't touch the local key-board until this morning. Tonight-I'm going to have another concert.

I spent three hours from dawn until about 9 at Arenbourg. The white wisteria is especially lovely there at the moment, and thanks to the birthday celebration, I am commemorating it with some additional purple wisteria to intensify the white. I am delighted to say that the bushes are looking ever so sturdy, and I think forming the vines into young trees already indicates the effort is a success. The morning was damp and the air moving ever so gently, and so heady with the honey of the white wisterian perfume that it was enough simply to breathe to get an impression of Araby and Heaven all rolled into one.

I brought back a big armful of lilies for the fireplace in the living room and the Chapel. And tonight both sections of the house are heavy with the delicious scent.

You will enjoy Mrs. Moore's letter. Odd that after all these years, it should arrive on the day H. Carter, Esquire had been expected. I like the idea of a Presbyterian librarian and teacher in a Catholic institution. That is one of the good sides of Natchez, along with a cemetery where sleep Catholic Protestants Jews and Negroes I understand there is a Protestant or two on the staff of the Convent in Natchitoches, too and while these little beacons of religious tolerance are modestly placed and at distant places on the broad field of religious schools, still one cannot help feel better to know that even these two tiny examples exist.

Not a peep from the direction of Briarwood, but that will probably be forthcoming along about Saturday or Sunday. And speaking of Sunday, I am glad to report that it may be rather more quiet than anticipated at this bend of the river, as the J. G.'s are not coming, -- Senior having been called to New York unexpectedly.

I was glad to see Mrs. Combs today when I dropped by Celeste's for a 9 o'clock cup of coffee. She seems more relaxed than the last time I saw her, although she puts her whole self in the Welfare busi- and by building a house at the same time probably forgets momentarily about her son in Korea. But

Darry Bell Jr

5384

Sunday, March 30, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice, and how unexpected, to find an air mail note in Saturday's post, giving me a glimpse of how the week end seemed to be shaping up. It was so kind of you and makes my birthday so much more fulsome and happy.

I don't reckon it is possible, but I'm hoping your morning, at least, was as peaceful and serene as mine. Only a few Ethiopians passed this way, coatless, for the day has been pleasantly warm and a little humid, with occasional gleams of sunshine.

J. A. went to Dallas yesterday. The S. G.'s could come and the Wenks didn't show up for dinner, so Pat, Ben and I, after an aperitif at Yucca, had dinner together at the big house, we three. You would have liked it and we would have liked to help celebrate. Conversation was good, and much of it revolved about politics and the Truman announcement he would not run for re-election, and around the personality and doings of one Leonardo da Vinci. It was all very pleasant among the fried chicken and such like and only the presence of a Lyme personalit to make the gathering perfect.

Yesterday a Mrs. Deford passed this way. I found her strolling the garden, someone at the store having told her it would be alright if she wanted to walk about a little. She lives 100 miles west of Oklahoma City and was spending the week end with her husband on Black Lake, some where near Briarwood, where her husband was fishing. She had driven down this way because she had heard about Melrose from her cousin, one Carl Barnes. I was so glad I had stumbled over her.

Our conversation was interrupted, however, by a telephone from some Baton Rouge agency, either on behalf of the State or Federal set up, regarding a man now in Louisiana who has charge of rehabilitating the blind. It seems he has been having rather hard going with his project and somebody in Baton Rouge, probably Mr. Aycock of the Welfare Department, told him there was one person whom he felt sure could give me a new lease on his job and the telephone call was accordingly put through to Melrose. I never tried rehabilitating a rehabilitator, but it will be fun seeing if I can take a crack at it.

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I was rather amused at something some North Texas pilgrims had to tell me this afternoon. They had been to the iris meeting and yesterday had seen Sister there. She told them she was going to spend the night with Weeks Hall in New Iberia. Imagine.

She also sent a message by them to me, saying she would be here this afternoon. I discounted that one, too, and at 9 o'clock, as I pen these lines, she hasn't put in an appearance, and, so far as I am concerned, she will not see me if she should, although I am quite sure she hadn't the slightest intention of passing this way.

I had rather expected the Dormons and la Storm, but I reckon Briarwood is probably getting iris enthusiasts today, too, and I will experience a "visitation" along about tomorrow or the next day.

One of the afternoon pilgrims had never been to "elrose before but somehow had heard of the plates and asked if she might get one or or, as she wanted to send one to this friend or that, and to her daughter, living in the Sourland Mountains of New Jersey. As I understand it, the daughter had never been to "elrose and what such an item may mean to her, I cannot imagine.

I skimmed through a few pages of "I Live On Air" by Chester or some such name. It has to do about broadcasting experience by the author in his association with W. B. C. I think it is a 1940 or 1941 publication and seems mildly amusing. The author speaks of Lowell Thomas and "his million dollar voice" as being one of W. B. C.'s great assets. That makes the book seem a little dated, what with Mr. T. having subsequently been so long with C. B. S.

At 5 o'clock this morning, I fished around in the ether waves to discover what I could about metropolitan weather, hoping this particular day would be altogether on the pleasant side. I gather that it inclined a bit on the cool side, however, but perhaps if you had an opportunity to make a round in the botanical gardens, the ozone was plentiful.

It goes without saying that I shall be ever so interested to learn how your day actually turned out, and I am sure that if you had an opportunity to operate your telepathy dials a bit, you had little difficulty in catching waves lengths from the Yucca station. I hope it has been such a happy day and should you be tuning in two minutes from now, you will find the back drop filled with concert music from the white garden.....

5386

Monday, March 31st, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so here it is the day after, --and here's hoping yesterday was grand and today nothing but a pleasant reverberation.

A pin point mist has been dripping along since last night with the weather bureau reporting less than a half inch in 24 hours, but with the promise for something more substantial tonight, and clearing skies on the morrow. The temperature has remained fairly high and thus Spring unfolds new batches of greenery and blotches of color all over Arenbourg and Melrose. I made the most of the favorable dampness to round up some items for transplanting, light purple and deep purple wisterians that will harmonize and contrast nicely with the Arenbourg collection. I got fairly damp in the doing, but a hot shower and some dry clothes put me all straight in a jiffy.

No tremor out of Briarwood as yet, so I reckon tomorrow may be the magical day.

Lillian Trichell passed this way again during the afternoon, following her jaunt into South Louisiana. I gathered from what she had to say that at long last she is aware to all the outrageous performances in the Wenk section, and she reported harum-scarum antics at Lafayette.

She reported seeing Blythe but said Dr. Rand was detained in his arrival as Blythe's mother wasn't well.

She said the people to whom she had given plates had been enchanted with them and she wanted a half dozen more to send to other people and I was glad I had them for her.

She added one other note from Briarwood which she had picked up during her stop there last Thursday. She said the Dormons were fine but were in something of a panic because their guest, --she apparently didn't know and probably the Dormons never mentioned la Storm, who is, perhaps, traveling with her niece, --and the panic was caused by the failure of the Briarwood water system, and there wasn't a drop, save what could be hauled from the brooklet far from the house. I reckon the electric pump may have failed, --I certainly hope the water table hasn't dropped, but however that may be, it

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5387

seems to be particularly unfortunate that the thing should have gone hay-wire at just the moment la Storm was approaching, --it reminded me of the business here last summer when little Miss Ida blew in with Helen and Lucille. Another point about this calamity is the fact that the last time la Storm visited Briarwood, the big freeze of 1951 hit the place and for a week Briarwood was snowbound, and it was but with the greatest difficulty they were eventually able to get the lady and her niece back into the outside world to catch a train back to South Carolina. I pause to knockwood, but should la Storm pass this way at the moment, we still do have the pump functioning.

This afternoon I was reminded again of another of the curious folk ways customs that still survive in this remote section, and which probably will die out with the next generation. The cook said she wanted to get off on Sunday as he uncle was being buried. I told her there ought to be some pretty flowers in the gardens and that I would fix her up with a fine bouquet. But she hastened to recall that members of the family couldn't take flowers to their kinsmen's funerals, if one wanted to avoid a death in one's family circle within the following year. The man who died was Uncle Nathan Carpenter, crowding his 90's if not his 100's, and probably about as heavily burdened with relatives as anyone in the parish.

I think I have mentioned before that to avoid a like disaster of a death in the family, no relative of the corpse must ever lend a hand in digging the grave. This often presents a unique problem for when people like Uncle Nathan die, kind to everybody for miles around, a search may be long before rounding up anyone qualified to use the pick and shovel. Perhaps, under such circumstances, it is just as well that they let so much time elapse between Uncle Nathan's death around the middle of last week until this coming Sunday, for it is possible by that late date they may have discovered somebody who isn't related to the old man to prepare his final resting place.

I was reminded the other evening of something long forgotten when I was skimming through the pages of "I Live On Air" wherein the author was speaking of various aspects of the ABC handling of the "Wong-way" Corrigan visits to various American cities, following his return from his solo flight to Ireland. Mr. Belle and I chanced to be in New Orleans on the day he was scheduled to receive a civic reception. Mr. Belle made an appointment to meet me at a restaurant on Royal Street where I waited from one o'clock until five for him. Finally I returned home and found him terribly upset. It was only when I entered he remembered our appointment and because he had completely forgotten it and couldn't find me, he had searched the city hall and the police office, and even gone thought he was talking not about the police office.

Dora 3/28
5388

Tuesday, April 1st, 1952.

Memorandum:

The Dormon plot thickens. After expecting to see them blow in at any time, I was quite unprepared this afternoon when Caroline telephoned me from Briarwood, --or rather the country grocery store at Saline, a few miles up the road.

She invited Celeste and me to come for dinner on Thursday to view the dogwood and iris. I am not supposed to know anything about the Briarwood calendar, of course, and so I merely asked her if the four of us would be alone or if she was having a party. She said they would be alone.

In view of what has gone before, --at least so far as my imagination has taken it, this seems a little puzzling. And the whole thing seems more obscure when, on second thought, I recall that William stated the reason Caroline couldn't attend the South Louisiana iris show was because she was expecting a botanist. I don't know why I didn't ask myself at the time how it was that Caroline wouldn't have welcomed the opportunity to take a botanist with her since one may assume a botanist would, undoubtedly be entranced at the opportunity to view Louisiana's greatest native floral show.

The whole thing makes no sense up to this point, and will be exceeded only if Celeste and I go to Briarwood to look at dogwood and native iris when there are ample samples of both slap in our own gardens. I shall take up the matter with Celeste at 9 o'clock coffee on the morrow and if her program isn't too heavy, I shall probably run up to road, not to see the iris or the dogwood but in anticipation of finding "the botanist" crashing about somewhere in the glades.

Personally, I have never cared much for so-called "surprises", and that line on la Storm's card illustrates as well as anything how inconvenient the hint of one may turn out.

Eventually, if it should actually turn out that la Storm hasn't dreamed of setting foot on Louisiana soil, I shall have much material to include in my next letter to her.

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I d n't suppose any of this has anything to do with a so-called April Fool's joke, but it is certainly simmering down to something like that.

And speaking of the April Fool's Day business, the only example I bumped into today was, --of all places, -- on the five o'clock radio news broadcast this morning when the voice of the news commentator introduced the announcer, and since I am accustomed to the day to day early morning program, I must say the thing held something of a jar as it broke on the air waves. At the conclusion of the 15 minute broadcast, the two gentlemen resumed their usual roles for the commercial and the signing off and in unison cried "April Fool at the ether waves, all of which seed a little tacky.

And speaking of radio programs, I heard a comedy thing a while back in which a man asked his 8 year old nephew how he had enjoyed the Church service he had attended that Sunday morning. The child responded:

"I like the music alright but it seemed to me the commercial was a little long."

I reckon the broadcasting stations will be working overtime tonight, retelling the vote by vote counting of the primaries being held today in Wisconsin and Nebraska. I shall be interested in learning the results on the morrow, but in spite of so much experience in the piecemeal dribblets the radio stations seem to delight in handing out all night long, I, myself, find the whole business a mighty bore, and can somehow get through the night without having to keep my ear glued to the endless string of ever changing totals.

Like me, I suppose you are enjoying the Larry Leseur broadcasts, but, nevertheless are looking forward to Ed. Morrow's return. I am so glad you gave me a biographical sketch of the latter the other day, for it was all news to me. I was interested to know he has a home in the Lowell Thomas neighborhood, Westchester and Dutchess counties along with Connecticut seem so steady in their appeal for eminent New Yorkers while Long Island somehow seems to fluctuate from generation to generation as a popular residential neighborhood for the same type of people. So many things to talk about and such a nice musicale to anticipate instead of listening to Wisconsin vote counting....

1888

Mrs. Storm 3/31
Cenla 3/20

5390

Wednesday, April 2nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

I scream every time I think of the tomfoolery connected with the Storm business, for in today's post comes the enclosure. That she should be climbing aboard her niece's plane to swoop down on New Orleans is no surprise, and since Briarwood hasn't as ample landing fields in its neighborhood as has Melrose, I reckon I am not likely to bump into the lady when making my bow at the Dormons on the morrow. I don't even know if I'm going, as I left whatever arrangements were to be made to Celeste who was supposed to telephone her at noon today. It will be time enough for me to learn about such particulars on the morrow, as I drop a coffee cup at Celeste's and pick up a wine glass to welcome the Knipmeyers.

Marvelous weather seems to be obtaining pretty much across the country and with a pleasant 80 degrees and much sunshine in this area, it was an inspiration to have a go at gardening with all hands to the pump today. I asked the store to discourage pilgrims, should any pass this way, and accordingly I was able to divide my time between Arenbourg and Melrose to advantage. I have a couple of appointments for the morrow, one at 8 o'clock and another at 4, which ought to give me a couple of hours in the morning and an equal number in the afternoon, and still be able to squeeze in the Knipmeyers and the Briarwood business. You will notice from the enclosure that Cenla was willing to accept the new hour and limited numbers which I set forth for Sunday, and I'm glad I shall thus be relieved of the hordes that otherwise might have descended upon me.

Mrs. Coombs dropped in for a moment this afternoon. She seems to be feeling pretty well and asked me if I could interpret a remark, made by the merchant-planter when she stopped at the store on business. He said he was glad to see her and wished she might have a coke with him although he assumed probably she, too, had to watch her calories. She assured him calories had to take care of themselves and she would enjoy a coke. I

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take it the question was simply a reaction to the prolonged cold wave that has been blowing across the fence. At supper tonight, J. A. seemed in a gayer mood, so I take it the breezes may have let up. I was amused to learn that in spite of earlier enthusiasm for Mr. Taft, he now thinks, regardless of the Wisconsin and Nebraska primaries, that Taft couldn't win an election even though he might get the nomination. General Eisenhower's recent remark suggesting a degree of conservatism must have made a most favorable impression in some quarters, if not on me.

The tractors continue droning from morning until night across the cotton fields, but planting will not start for another week. Oddly enough, I'm all for pushing the planting ahead, but my reason has nothing to do about the welfare of the crop but rather the stability of Yucca. The annual invasion by the big, fat bumble bees is upon us, and it has about reached the point where I need to supply myself, - and guests, if any, with parasols to hold over our heads when gracing the galleries. These are the insects that bore holes in the old beaded beams, and after going straight up into the wood, turn at right angles and burrow along for about a foot, at the end of which they probably either lay eggs or store honey, or possibly both. The result of all their industry is that showers of sawdust come sifting down from on high and there's something about the quality of the stuff, --it seems to have a mixture of soft wax about it, that sticks mightily to everything on which it falls, - furniture, clothing or perruques. I suppose about 150 labor vigorously from dawn to dusk on each gallery producing a sort of sawdust mist that never ceases. A little broom work, the dusting off the the leaves of the water hyacinthes, the skimming, or the surface of St. Giggins' Mountain and so on wouldn't be too arduous every half hour, but the devastating thing is the wreckage being caused by all this business on the timbers. I have soaked the gallery ceilings with D. D. T., even as I have in years gone by, but the bees just lap up the stuff and seem to bore more vigorously than before. And so this business will move along at full blast until cotton is up and the airplanes are out in force to spread their deadly dew. That is why I am observing at appropriate moments in the right circles that the season is certainly advancing with remarkable strides.

And now for a bit of Lehar and Cavallero and so to bed....

Marybelle Davis

3/30/52

5392

0088

Thursday, April 3rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

The truth is: - I feel as though I had been to Alaska and back, all in the same day. And I mentioned Alaska not because of the climate, for it has been pleasantly warm, but merely because both Briarwood and Alaska chance to be North of here.

We reached the Briarwood gate about noon, and had found our way to the new log house, through many a winding wood's road by 12:30 at the latest. The dogwood shimmering snowy white through the woods reminded me a little of Sterling Forest, and from the gallery of the house, slap in the woods, one could feast the eye on explosions of young dogwood trees in full flower from every side, South, toward which the house on its little knoll faces, East and West. The gallery floor is flush with the ground, made of about the roughest hunks of stone set in concrete one is likely to stumble over. The three steps to the front door are about 3 or 4 feet in length, wonderfully rough and real neck-breakers.

One enters a large living room, panelled in finished wood without stain, paint or varnish, perhaps rubbed with linseed oil. The floors are good and carpetless. The storm furniture is bamboo or some such and comfortable. Nothing by way of a shade, curtain or drapery softens the excellent light coming in from the three windows on the South giving on the gallery or the two on the East side, flanking the big stone fireplace.

To the West of the big living room is a little bedroom, with a small window on the gallery and one on the West. Next to the bedroom a little bath with no running water. Immediately behind the big room is a kitchen, and next to it, on the West, I suppose a bedroom of the ladies Dormon.

So much for the lay out. J. A. had given me a bottle of muscatel wine the other day, and I presented that on our arrival. We had a large portion of same before dinner, - in the big living room, and a delicious meal, simple, but wonderfully contrived, fried chicken, rice and gravy, some sort of a salad and a chopped up fruit dessert.

5393

5393

Ole Virginie had a cold and looked old. Caroline talked. Among other things she said was that the Leutcher-Starks were there last week to see the iris. They are threatening to dig her a deeper well. As we have known for the past two years, she volunteered the information that Mr. Leutcher-Stark was anxious for her to paint all the Louisiana iris, --which would be thousands, and he would pay her \$25.00 for each iris she painted but she just hasn't time to bother. She added, paradoxically enough, she admired Dr. Worsley so much, that the latter had driven out there, 20 miles or so, when she had telephoned for her to come when she had influenza. She said she had written the lady doctor only yesterday, asking her not to press her for the doctor bill, as the Dormons had no money. That is so typically Dormon, for Caroline could easily paint an iris a day, and she not only has the native models but billions of them she has painted for other publications which she could more or less duplicate, and, as I figure it, that ought to bring her in about \$150.00 a week but somehow that doesn't seem to balance against no money for the doctor, and at the same time seems a little lacking in grace for people threatening to dig her a new well. One can't figure out the Dormons except to say they love the woods, live in the heart of the same, and are as happy as clams and possessed of about as much business sense and money.

And add to that that they have a servant, Nora, who occupies the former Briarwood home, and that lady of color has a flock of grown up and growing up children, and they all combine to do outside and inside work for the Briarwood menage. It's all wonderfully puzzling, and that's about all one can say about the whole thing.

We drove to the iris quarter, deeper in the woods and at a boggy point where the surrounding knolls must drain lots of water to make it ideal for stuff that likes its feet in water. The bog is about half as big as the Melrose iris garden and there aren't half as many iris there, but I reckon there are many of much rarer vintage. Except for the things growing in the woods, one sees no flowers, -- no German iris, for example, or roses, or anything that will give any suggestion of human love of color and fragrance, and as the underbrush grows slap up to the gallery, one has no place to plant anything anyway, in spite of the several hundred acres of woods that would be a paradise if they would only toss in an occasional bulb or root.

That old over worked phrase, "out of this world" seems to apply perfectly to Briarwood for I felt, on leaving, I had just quitted such a place. But I'm glad I went, for now I better comprehend when people use the same phrase about Melrose, which also is in the same category, but on slightly different lines, I

reckon.

5394

Mr. Norvell Jr. 5394
Fort Worth
Hodding Carter 3/31

Friday, April 4th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Perhaps I should begin this note with a post script to yesterday's, since, come to think of it, I apparently forgot to mention that La Storm had not included Briarwood on her present Louisiana go-round. What actually kept Caroline at Briarwood, heaven alone knows, and the more so as she loves to roam the open road and as at least two people passed her way, inviting her to make the Iris pow-wow trip as their guest. I reckon it is to be shunted aside as just another "Dormon-ism" that beggars explanation.

I'm afraid I piled on so many details about the Briarwood hejira yesterday that I not only succeeded in boring you with details but touched on nothing else, and that in spite of the fact that yesterday was really a big news day, so far as Washington, at least, was concerned.

The firing of Newbold Morris, followed so quickly by his firer, Mr. McGrath must have been a bit puzzling, so far as radio and news print space was concerned to the visiting officials from the Netherlands. With one tornado to the North of us last night and another to the South, the ether waves were in confusion, and all night brilliant flashes but little thunder punctuated the spread from dusk to dawn.

I had hoped W H O, Des Moines, would broadcast the speech of the Queen of Holland before the joint session of Congress which had taken place during the afternoon, I believe, but while the re-broadcast was probably put on the air, I never heard a peep, since the atmosphere had Iowa completely blotted out.

And then, too, the dismissal of the Attorney General and the head of the Clean-up Agency gave the news commentators such toothsome morsels that the Netherlands Queen scarcely got a line. I do think it surprising how few Senators attended the joint session, --only about 37, I believe, and of all people, bearing such a name, Senator Holland of Florida failed to put in an appearance.

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5395

We continue to get fairly high winds tonight, perhaps 30 mile an hour numbers, not enough to blow off any shingles, but sufficient to bring in exceedingly cool temperatures. The prediction had been for 80 degrees during the afternoon, but it was 53 at five o'clock and now at 9 is 45, which certainly demonstrates the weather man can make mistakes. I reckon we must be getting the tail end or outer fringe of the big blow that is said to be whipping up the Gulf area and passing on eastward tonight.

My jaunt in the big road was so out of keeping with my usual routine that I failed to go to sleep last night after folding up my beard, and so I fished around in the air waves to find something, even though favorite stations were not available. I was enchanted when I stumbled over a talking program, and doubly entranced when I discovered it was none other than Senator Taft, giving a song and dance to the Republicans at Springfield, Illinois.

That man beats anything I ever ran up against for nerve. The burden of his speech was that we ought to select delegates for him in the July Convention because he is opposed to everything the New Deal and the Fair Deal stands for. I at least admire his frankness in thus playing on the nerves of the hate-Roosevelt, hate Truman section of the upper crust. What mowed me down, however, was his eternal statistics. He said that under the Republican President, Herbert Hoover, in the year 1931, the Government took only 6 per cent of our taxes, while under the present Democratic regime 18 per cent is being extracted. From this, I gather, he is trying to make the big boys think that there was nothing like the "good old days" of 1931 under Hoover. Frankly that's just what I fear Mr. Taft might be stupid enough to try to undertake, --setting the clock back to Hoover, but now he can imagine anybody wants 1931 back again, I cannot imagine.

On the gardening front, I have been pondering on some of the program for this year's planting, so that it may include some deep summer items. Before folding up my beard, I think I shall do something about getting some Philippine lilies so they can be started this spring. I have had fairly good luck with them in the past and usually by July when they come into flower they are usually 8 or 9 feet in height and their great Easter like blossoms exude a marvelous perfume. We lost the few we had through no fault of ours, but I think it will be nice celebrating with them.....

Best head 3/2
5396

Sunday, April 7th 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday air mail in Saturday's post. Somehow I hadn't expected one quite so soon, figuring as I did that the natal day week end would consume all energies, not to mention the bogging down of people, which, according to my expectation, would push letter writing back until Palm Sunday had arrived. But instead your lovely letter came to hand to make my Palm Sunday week end a happy one, and I call down blessings on your head for having unleashed so much sunshine for me.

And speaking of sunshine, there has been lots of it in these parts over the week end. Saturday was brilliant but chilly with a brisk breeze slap off the ice cakes. But today was pure sunshine without the draft, and the result is a lazy invigoration that somehow invariably marks the advent of Spring.

But I had scant time to enjoy the lazy sensation, for the fine weather brought out the people and the people dove-tailed so neatly in their arrivals and departures that it was first dark before I was done with them, and after 8 o'clock before I had supped across the fence and withdrawn when the Reverend Fathers arrived for a game of Canasta, or should one spell it "Can-nasty".

I have often thought what a curious picture would result if one were able to portray next to each other in point of arrival and departure the cultural and economic status of each succeeding visitor. Today had a contrast that would have formed a striking graph, were the several attributes of one individual be placed along side the next. For instance an especially fancy hackard car with much liveried chauffeur and footman rolled up at the front gate and out stepped Mrs. Steward, mistress of Oak Alley and millions, dressed to the tip of the mode, exquisitely cultured and slightly inclining toward the dull side. With her was a Miss Boyd of California, friend of the late Anne Morgan and not too ponderous by or in spite of her probable gold ballast. An hour and a half

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later, as we were saying goodbye at the same point, an energetic daughter of the soil, white but a little on the Tobacco Road style, approached, explaining she had secured a neighbor in Grant Parish where she lived to look after her goats while she dashed up to the Cane River country to have a look at Melrose. The different in deportment and costume of the first batch and second was arresting.

Central La. Society

And then there was the group which I thought was going to be Cenla, --I must have read my mail badly, for it actually turned out to be the Historical Society. That went off nicely until we got back to the front gate when the President said the final meeting of the Society before sunset in would be in June and asked me if I would be the guest speaker. I declined. Some other officers horned in on the conversation, and so I compromised by saying I might open the winter sessions by taking to the platform at the first meeting in September. This tentative promise was the more readily forthcoming because the Harry Chocolates from Lake Charles were waiting for me. They have a vast acreage of tide lands along the Gulf Coast and, I suppose, were interested in that flim-flam compromise voted by the Senate last week concerning State versus Federal ownership of submarine titles covering oil rights. It was the Chocolates, following a visit here a few years ago, who decided to have their new home in the Lake Charles area built along Yucca lines, with architects coming here to take measurements, etc. They say they are enormously pleased with their home but now want to purchase a Cane River property with only enough acreage to raise five or six hundred head of cattle "just to cover the taxes, the idea of a Cane River retreat being to enable them to withdrawn from time to time from the whiz of the Gulf Coast and thus "get away from it all". I pointed out the desirability of the old Francois Robieux home on the Joyous Coast, and speaking of Francois Robieux reminds me of the huge laugh I got from your discovery of what unexpectedly happened when you unthinkingly decided to reduce Father Mississippi to initials.. In a paper on Free Masonry I once put down a subtitle, - "George Washington and F. M." and never felt so close to "Uncle George" before or since.

The hands came later, with Paul King being with them, the latter having flown down from Hartford for the day. Tomorrow night I hope I am less sleep and may thus talk a little more intelligently.....

5398

Monday, April 7th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The splendid weather continues and Mother Nature continues flouncing her finest greenery in ever widening circles. I swing my hoe in unison.

I am under the impression I enclosed a letter two or three days ago from Marybeth Davis, announcing her return to Kansas City following her vacation in Haiti. If I did enclose said letter, you may recall she mentioned picking up a few books in New Orleans on her way home, including Ghosts, bearing the Lyle Saxon book plate. I intended pointing to that paragraph when I sent the letter, but neglected doing so.

Either you or I have the photographs taken of the book shelves in my living room, --as executed for the Library Commission a number of years ago. If memory serves, the book referred to stands out rather well in that photograph. Be that as it may, it chanced to be one of the books stolen either by James Cunningham when, as Rudolph's friend and the Madam's guest, he staid in the house for a couple of days at one time, and later told Rudolph he had lifted some items. Or it is possible Mr. Cunningham did not chance to lift that particular book, for that Mr. Van somebody, a friend of Miss Alberta's who was invited here by Celeste two or three years ago lifted a few items from the same shelf, I believe. He was here when Yucca was being repainted inside and the flying in and out of workmen and said Mr. Van was enervating.

I suppose that since Mr. Cunningham's home is in Texas, it isn't likely he disposed of the book in question in New Orleans, although he may have done so, since that would be the place a Saxon book plate might be expected to bring the best price. But it seems to me more likely that Mr. Van may have been the one to toss it on the market.

Be that as it may, it seems to me one of the most remarkable coincidences I have recently run across that a book stolen from this house should be disposed of in the Crescent City and acquired by a Kansas City friend who by chance happened to be passing through Louisiana at the time the book became available. I have

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written Marybeth the circumstances and told her I am glad she got the book but have suggested she inquire of her book shop to see if they will tell her from whom it was purchased, suggesting that she cook up some flim-flam tale of a notation she found in the book that impelled her to want to write to the former owner, assuming that the book had probably been in private hands following the death of Mr. Saxon a number of years back. It will be interesting to see if anything comes of it, but whether something does or not, the whole business, making such a neat circle, presents quite an oddity, don't you think.

I notice I need a new ribbon and I have one, but my secretary is under the weather and so between now and tomorrow night, I'm going to try to get some son of the soil to tinker with the thing a little. If there should be a skip of one day in receiving a letter, you will of course understand that my effort in teaching mechanics to an agricultural soul hasn't produced much fruit. I have been successful in the past, but that is no sign I shall have equal luck with today's problem.

I notice there's a letter in today's batch coming from Nina. I'm wondering what she and little Miss Alberta are planning for magnolia painting in May. I have about made up my mind I am not going to move a finger by way of inviting them. After all, there is a vague chance, I suppose, that Carolyn may surprise me by carrying out her expressed intention of coming early in May, and secondly there is always a chance that Raynie, whose health isn't good, may eventually reach the point where he will not join with his younger brother in making such strange noises about little Miss A. coming here, and I think I shall stick to the chance that Carolyn may come, keeping the decks clear instead of being nice to little Miss A. and starting a potentation dust bowl.

And another thing, if I haven't mentioned it already: Celeste asked me the other day if I thought Caroline Dornon's Wild Flowers of Louisiana might be obtained second-hand. I told her I would ask you, and she seemed enchanted. I think Celeste would probably care to spend mighty little on a book so if you ever should stumble over one, you might mention price before purchase, --and don't let the search for one take any time whatsoever, for it is merely one of those things that should you chance to stumble over one you might make a mental note, but otherwise dismiss the thing from your mind. No-hum, I could chat forever but must stop.....

1042

5400

Tuesday, April 8th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Re: the new ribbon.

My secretary remains in bed but after all these years, Peter undertook to insert the fresh ribbon for me, and although he specializes in rigging up tractors, he took old Dr. Underwood apart and put it together with all the facility of an old established firm in the typewriting field although this was the first time he had ever so much as set finger to a key.

I am sorry to say that the pilgrimage business was brisk today, and all were consistently dumb, but it is from the dumb ones I learn the most and one lady from Minnesota taught me a new trick that I shall employ frequently until the cotton grows to dusting status. I had intended a short tour any way but it turned out even more so than I had anticipated when we approached Yucca and someone remarked the sound of bees. There are millions of the harmless big old black bumble bees that humble around from dawn to dusk on the galleries, but as they have no stingers, or at least have never been known to use them, they are quite harmless. But the lady cried out in alarm, halted in her tracks and said that if there were any bees around, she wanted to turn and leave. I told her that frankly there was a swarm of them, as she could readily see and hear, whereupon she bolted and the balance of the party with her. Hence forth, when I'm busy and the pilgrims unusually dull, I shall work that one up for all it is worth, and it ought to be worth a lot as a time saver.

The season isn't most favorable for undertaking certain garden re-arrangements, but I recall Mr. Bachelier's opinion that "the time to move a tree or a plant is when you are ready to move it," --implying the season was a secondary matter.

And so, with a view to giving Yucca the dignity that has long been its due, I removed a section of the picket fence facing the front gallery, --perhaps thirty feet of it, directly opposite that portion of Yucca's southern facade where open the doors to the boudoir and drawing room.

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With the fence down, along with the tons of clematis and honeysuckle that have always hidden the fence itself, a whole new vista is glimpsed from the front gallery, stretching the entire length of the iris garden, with its lines of althias, crepe myrtles in the smaller plants or trees, and the grandiflora and didymous magnolias and the larger palm trees, --a half dozen allees, flecked with the multi-colors of the native and German iris, heightened by the deep green of occasional box and yew, and the whole approach to Yucca through any of these walks quite striking in it somewhat ponderous but noble lines. The picket fences continue at each end of the 30 foot gap to their west termination at the old gate we usually used, and, --or thather, I should have said to the Sawt, and to the West to the end of the garden, demarked by the bamboo hedge. Extending into the iris garden I have marked off a semi-circle, extending from the fence to a gate that will dominate the several paths running from the iris garden, and the effect as one approach the house is really imposing. I am casting about the country for a great iron sugar kettle, -- for I hear there was one 7 feet across in some remote section of the parish, and another of 11 feet across somewhere else, and if these can be secured, the pot will go slap in the center of the semi-circle, and reflect the Southern facade of Yucca as one approached. I didn't accomplish as much as I had hoped, and from now until after Easter, I reckon I shall be subjected to endless interruptions, but the fence is down, most of the myriads of stuff pushed around and back, and eventually the semi-circular fore-court will be fenced in and properly hidden by a hedge, and Yucca will astonish a flock of people who have never seen its majestic lines before, for, if you stop to think of it, no one has ever been able to take a photograph of Yucca from its Southern exposure. Now they will have that opportunity, and I'll bet dollars to doughnuts the first person coming this way with a camera will be that tiresome Clarence Laughlin, but I hope not, but rather that Carolyn may be among the first to make use of it on a film.

This autumn I shall have to re-arrange the bananas and butterfly lilies along the gallery so they will balance more pleasantly with the new approach, but that will be small as an undertaking, although sufficiently laborious as a move.

Isn't it nice having Ed. Morrow back again. I like what he had to say about the Queen of the Netherlands and of her Mother on tonight's broadcast.

I had thought I would write a stack of letters tonight, but I seem sleepy and so I think I shall leap through a shower and have a little session with Messrs. Rogers, Behar, and Strauss before calling it a day, -- thanks to little Miss Lee of Lyme.....

0012

5402

Wednesday, April 9th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The dust bowl is blowing again, but aside from the gauze like film present in every direction, the sun has had no competition in the sky and tonight the moon is big and round and wonderfully orange.

At noon we were promised a tornado or two for this evening, sometime between 5 and 10, but at 5 the weather bureau issued a special announcement, assuring Louisiana residents that the big winds had treked Northward.

While it occurs to me, I must mention something mildly amusing that occurred when Mrs. Stewart and Miss Boyd were examining the treasures of the African House on Sunday. The mistress of Oak Allee was especially fascinated by the yellow cotton and asked me if I could tell her something about it. I explained that during the ante bellum period it was the staple given the slaves to raise as their own little crop, with the color being so distinct that there would never be any temptation, when harvesting it, to reach over into the row of white cotton belonging to the master, the white staple being so easily recognized at a glance. I told her the bale in the African House had been raised here on Melrose by Miss Cammie a number of years ago but that the seed of the yellow cotton had originally come from Nanking.

"How perfectly delightful," was Mrs. Stewart's enthusiastic but altogether serious response, and turning to Miss Boyd continued: -- And just to think, Grace was on very friendly terms with Miss Cammie but Ma, her sister, was my favorite, and yet it was Ma who supplied the first seed."

Eventually I must write that one to Dora who was quite fascinated by some of Grance King's original letters here at Melrose, and I'm sure he'll get a huge kick out of her cotton seed sister, Ma.

Naturally, it goes without saying I never bothered to correct Mrs. Stewart's impression.

5403

Isn't it good having Ed. Morrow back. I enjoyed his summation of tonight's news, although I had expected he would do a little more about the Truman seizure of the steel industry.

Last night I fell asleep just before the President went on the air, but woke up again just as he began speaking. I liked everything about it and am glad he made his concept of the outrageous stand of the steel industry so clear. I'll bet more than one rugged individualist just about collapsed of high blood pressure, what with the fury that must have been theirs at the President's temerity to call a spade a spade. By taking the stand he did, and by enunciating his opinions with such force, it struck me that again a Democrat had demonstrated that the party, knowingly or unknowingly, was again setting forth a sign post which the Republicans since Lincoln have willfully ignored: --that the great problem of Government is the distribution of wealth.

It was pleasant to hear from the Kleisers today. Somehow I had gathered from something written around Christmas time that they were fixing to pass this way about that time and accordingly I had put off sending them a plate, but the other day I concluded I had had the thing kicking around about long enough, and hence the enclosed bread and butter.

I was impressed by Mr. Taft's success in the Illinois primaries totaling 800,000 or some such number of votes for Mr. Republican. I never would have dreamed so many people in Illinois would have joined with him in sighing for the good old days of Mr. Hoover in 1931 and the 6 per cent income tax, but on second thought, Illinois was the home of Uncle Joe Cannon and the farmers and laborers of his home State were always returning him to congress although he consistently rode rough shod everything by way of legislation that would have benefited them, which seems silly, but is nevertheless true. So is Mr. Taft, - in a way.

The ladies went to Alexandria to meet their New Iberia nephews and grandsons who are coming for the week end. I reckon I'll get enough company without going anywhere to meet any.....

5404

Thursday, April 10th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I liked what the weather brought us last night, for the tornado never did show up by around 11 o'clock a rain began and the thermometer slumped in sympathy. It has drizzled all day and the thermometer has refused to move much about the 40's or 50's.

And I may my plans fit in with this dampness by moving a lot of stuff around to suit my ideas as to the new outer "court" of Yucca. There were a couple of big Chinese magnolias that had to be taken up, or sawed down, and as I can't bear to think of the latter, and as weather conditions were so favorable for the former, I set myself the task of digging huge holes before tackling the uprooting of the trees. The plantation was completely on a holiday, but as I was whacking away with my spade, I heard voices by the side gate where I found Peter, Ezra and Fanny moving a telephone pole which I had condemned some months back because it stuck out like a sore thumb from the nandina hedge between my gate and the African House.

And so, after they had moved the pole, --trying to get it done before Joe Henry appeared, --they came and gave me a hand with the deciduous magnolias which were uprooted in a trice, shall we say, and now, after a tremendous soaking by heaven and by a garden hose, --I hope the poor things aren't drowned, - they look as though they had always been there. I suppose the trees were 20 years old and certainly as many feet in height. The tap root of each was imposing and I can't imagine how I would ever have turned the trick by myself, but perhaps the whole business should simply be charged off to luck. I shall charge it off to a miracle if either one of them survive.

That that leads me to mention the big old crepe myrtles transplanted from Mr. Earnest's former garden some weeks back. I am surprised to discover that all of them are starting to put out their 1952 leaf system, as brave and opulent as you can imagine, and while it must be said they are the

5405

easiest things in the world to transplant and make grow, these were such large trees I never expected them to manifest signs of life again. I suppose the "proof of the pudding" will come along about July or August when the full heat gets turned on and the full strain of living will be at its height for vegetation generally. If they actually survive that test, then I shall be convinced that nothing can ever kill a crepe myrtle.

I heard the Randall speech last night, or whatever may be the name of the Inland Steel company that voiced the resentment against Mr. Truman on behalf of the combined steel industry. I thought it pleasant to listen to, devoid of logic and generously filled with the usual "big-shot" misrepresentations. The two points, as I recall, were that Congress hadn't voted the President the power to seize the steel companies; and secondly the steel companies don't make a 19 or 20 dollar profit on each ton since the Federal taxes deprive them of the entire amount.

Naturally Congress didn't vote the President the power, since in reality the Constitution gives the President the power to do almost anything "in an emergency", and, of course, so far as the cry that they don't get the full 20 dollar profit on each ton of steel, how in the world do they suppose other people fare, or does the poor millionaire class assume that no one pays income tax on his earnings. Then, too, I was sorry the man indulged in that old and moth eaten subterfuge about the steel companies being owned by a million investors, when everybody knows that big steel, while it may have a million different stock holders, is in reality dominated, controlled and almost completely owned, not by a million stock holders of a few picayune shares but rather by the big boys who have the great blocks of stocks in their own pockets. The static was so poor I couldn't hear Frank Edwards last night, but I'm hoping I may be luckier tonight, for it would be a pleasure to hear him take them down a peg or two.

It seems to me I have a clipping about the Historical Society, which, I suppose, is from the Alexandria Town Talk of about Monday or Tuesday, and I suppose was something tossed off by la belle Doloman, as extracted from some other news item, but I send it along regardless.

It's always a pleasure to hear from Mr. Cain but I'm hoping his Huntington Cairns doesn't blow in sometime during the week end when things will probably be at a high pitch at this bend of the river. And so off with my damp clothes, a hot bath, and a little musicale before folding up my beard.....

5406

Friday, April 11th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letters of Sunday and Tuesday in today's post. The cancellation date on one was blurred and by chance the Tuesday letter was read first, which, because of an interruption, enables me to contemplate Good Saturday with added zest, since I have both letters tucked away in the armoire and am thus guaranteed a second little chat the moment Y. C. puts in an appearance on the morrow.

I'm so glad you found the account of the Briarwood jaunt so comprehensive. It might well have been otherwise, for I must confess the unusual sensation of being in the big road made me so sleepy that night that my Memo might well have turned out a mere scrawl.

And may I thank you for transcribing precisely what la Storm actually wrote. My secretary is not adept at long hand and the Storm correspondence when in long hand, depends more on my imagination than the secretary's interpretation, and apparently my imagination was inadequate in that instance.

Heavy cloudiness obtained all day, with the thermometer "hoovering" around 60, with the humidity in the 90's. All that, of course, was to the good so far as the Arenbourg and Melrose children are concerned. The forecast for Saturday is continued cloudiness but temperatures in the 80's, and that will be alright, too.

During the past two days the new leaves on the live oaks unfolded but completely, introducing a thickness of shade that seems like veritable darkness in this overcast weather. Little clouds of tender green are beginning to form in the topmost branches of the pecanese which means their new summer finery is being shaken out, and since it is said "pecanese never get caught by Jack Frost", I reckon one may assume the winter is but definitely finished, although it does seem as though we never had any except on the 1st or 2nd of November.

I believe the J. M. Henrys, -pere et fils, are

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likely to arrive here tonight. The S. G.'s will not come, and the latest report, --always subject to change without notice, is that none of the Wenks will appear, and even their Cloutierville emporium is said to be out of commission for the Easter holidays. People with sense, of course, will always wait to get sick or injured during regular office hours, and never on holiday week ends, --or at least that seems to be the idea of many physicians. But if anyone is fool enough to patronize a Wenk, he just about deserves to find himself up a tree on occasion.

I have been soaked up to my knees since 5:30 this morning, although I did change my shoes and trousers twice, only to get bogged down again as soon as I had done so. By some miracle, --the cloudy weather, I suppose, --I escaped pilgrims, but unless I am vastly mistaken, I shall have more than a quota totals on Saturday and Sunday. Fortunately I have nothing on my calendar which will make the whole thing a "catch as catch can" business, but that is better than trying to cram uninvited guests in between scheduled appointments, as was the case with la Steewart last Sunday, but I must say I wouldn't have missed the "Nanking Nan" business for anything.

I think I shall finish the Chester volume, -- "I Live On Air" this week end. It is mildly interesting and done in newspaper type, making it easy to skim over. I take it Chester is concerned primarily with the broadcasting of special news events, and there is vast to do about getting the first flash or more extended accounts of latest happenings on the air, with the primary purpose seeming to be that of getting a second or a minutes drop on the Columbia and Mutual airing of the same news. As in the case of radio stations that have to give all night sessions on the gradual totalling of votes in order to be first with the results, so in the other branches of human activity the same mania seems to persist, and for the life of me I can't see any point in breaking one's neck in order to blare out some bit of information one minute or two before a rival organization blows on its trumpet. I suppose there must be some advantage in this split second hawking of an event that by no means of the imagination can be pumped up into something world shaking, but I don't comprehend what all the rush is about. But I must fold, holding the thought your week end is ever and ever so pleasant.....

24043

Cane River plate

Sunday, April 13th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your Sunday letter waiting for me in my armoire this morning when Y. C. dropped in.

I enjoyed ever word of your splendid letter and was delighted to know the natal day went off so nicely, although I can well imagine you were altogether enchanted when night came on and you were eventually able to fold up beard in the privacy of your own boudoir. Isn't it wonderful what tricks do play about the mind when dreams be-stir themselves, and the concept of little Miss Lee, Lestan and our friends, all gathered together under a great big spreading cedar was altogether charming.

And may I thank you for sending along the clippings which I am going to enjoy at my next sitting. But oddly enough, the fact that you mentioned the Roosevelt plate as being the subject of one clipping set my head to buzzing and automatically unrolled an idea for another place which I shall begin work on immediately. It will be something like this:

Cane River will cross it diagonally, from upper left to lower right. A couple of symbols at the extreme upper left will indicate the town of Natchitoches, -- perhaps the circular staircase and "Uncle Jack" the statue of the "ood "arkie. Next will appear the Joyous Coast as indicated by Beaufort and Woodlawn or Oak "awn or Oakwood or whatever the Alphonse Prudhomme place is know by. Then will come Melrose which will be slap in the middle. A couple of houses and a Church will appear at that point, and under the Church will be some notation such as "St. Augustin's Church of "Children of Strangers". Next down the line will be a couple of oaks to indicate Magnolia, --(don't you love that, oaks to suggest magnolia). Then Kate Chopin's house. Then Uncle Tom's Cabin, with a cabin, perhaps, and Uncle Tom holding little Ava on his lap. In the upper open space at the right will be these words:

"Cane River,
Natchitoches Parish,
Louisiana."

In the lower left open space will be some writing, -- whatever seems appropriate when I have stirred it up.

Miss Chalkley
4/14/52
Smile Wiles
Easter card

5408

5409

It occurs to me this place should be identical with the Melrose Plantation plate, so far as border design and coloring are concerned. Then, if some people want to use the Cane River one in conjunction with the Melrose one, they will make quite a nice pair..

Thanks to your grand letter, this idea has come up for air. As described above, the whole thing must sound pretty sketchy, but if in any of it you see some flaw or if you have any ideas that would improve it, do let me know.

In the mean time, I shall write to Edwards China, indicating the idea and asking them to reserve all rights for us in the creation of such an entity. I shall write Nina tonight, asking her if she can give me a hand in the business. I hope she can, since the design would be the better if its details carried through. I shall include my "inimitable" sketch to her and a flock of snapshots of the various things I want included. If she cannot, I shall contact Robert Deblieux and give the thing a push in that direction.

And may I say thank you again for having been the source of this Cane River item.

Saturday was so ething to inspire on to start building an ark, for it poured all day. But the weather remained warm, and the Arenbourg and Yucca children apprantly thrived. Some of Juanita's friends came in the afternoon for a little tour, and I'm glad she was here to accompany us. Joe made the sloppy rounds, too, and later told me he was astonished and delighted at all he had learned about the place. The Henrys are sights.

Joe came to see me this morning. He wanted to buy me a new typewriter, but I declined on grounds that this one still functions alright and he could "hold the thought" until Chr stmas. I didn't tell him I already had a Royal never touched sitting on the Gayosa iron chest right here in my boudoir where we were chatting.

In spite of the mud, Joe wanted to make a round with me to see the new Gardener's Garter parterre, the new lay-out just beyond the great window of the Studio and the beginnings of the "avant-cour" immediately in front of Yucca. He liked the whole business, and I was glad as he is proba ly the only one save the General who will ever know they weren't always there.

We dined at the big house and all was lovely withnot a Wenk within miles. But here I am at the bottom of the page and not really well started. But tomorrow will be another day, and in th mean time, may I say thanks again for the happiness your elegant letter brought me this "aster morn.....

5410

Monday, April 14th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Cool and clear, --and all the pilgrims I didn't get yesterday deluged me this afternoon, --first Mrs. Wood who is a friend of Mrs. Coombs, then Ora before the departure of la Wood, and then a flock of people before Ora's departure, and these included a Mr. and Mrs. Campbell from whom we shall proba ly hear later, for they are lovely people, and then during their visit, two other sets of people whom I never saw but heard about only from the servants.

And speaking of a deluge, I'm wondering if Louisiana is likely to get its feet damp before the flood waters of Nebraska and Iowa have found their boistrous way to the Gulf.

I doubt if we ev r get any of the Missouri-Mississippi water in this section, but Red River water is just as wet, reckon, and it is the inability of Red River to flow into the Mississippi when the latter reaches flood stage that backs up Red River and spills it over into Cane. In 1945 the central Louisiana floods were at their height during mid April. I reckon it will take a other week or so for any Mississippi excesses to be felt in this area, if at all. I mention all this now with a view of assuring you, as you probably don't have to be assured, that while Melrose plantation may well go under water, the residences aren't like to experience any dampness, being on a high level of ground, although in the 1945 business, the water did come up to the baboo hedge at the end of the White Garden, which, I'll admit, is getting fairly close. But even though the water might seep over the White Garden and across the bricks of the front and back galleries, it isn't likely to get any higher, so I urge you not to give any prospective sea-scapes any worry.

Only one more dolorous thought relative to melting snows in Montana and the Dakotas, --with what uncertainty farmers and planters from St. Louis to the Gulf must be putting in their crops. Melrose began planting cotton today.

Just one more point: - I'm recalling how the hill billy politicians prevented the great spillways of South Louisiana from being opened during the 1945 floods because hill billy voters lived or more precisely squatted on State lands through which

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the excess waters would have flowed and relieved all pressure on the Red River Valley and the devastation in that area, even though it was tax payers' money which had purchased the lands and constructed the great spillway locks. If the Washington politicians, in their hatred of F. D. R's success with T. V. A. will forever prevent the same accomplishment in the Missouri that created an Eden out of the Tennessee Valley, then at least I hope the Louisiana politicians may be prevented from making "ducks and drakes" out of the flood controls in Louisiana, already completed but never permitted to operate.

The great advantage of all pilgrims treading hard on the heels of each other lies in the fact that the balance of one's day is left comparatively free, and so I was able to give a couple of hours to Arenbourg and a like number to Yucca,-- the "avant-cour" before the big parade got under way.

The ladies across the fence took off at 7:30 this morning to whisk the Regard boys back to their home in New Iberia. The ladies will return here late Wednesday night. I'm still experiencing vibrations from my venture to Briarwood a week ago last Thursday with the two ladies, and just to think they have been in the big road every day since then and are now in South Louisiana. I suppose my wonder must be mixed with jealousy at the thought of Madam Regard, heading toward her 82nd birthday, being able to take foot in hand with alacrity and enthusiasm while I am thanking my lucky stars I don't have to get beyond the front gate.

Mrs. Wood brought me the enclosed Dormon article. It was clipped from the Shreveport Times a couple of weeks ago, -- and undoubtedly bore a March or April, 1952 date line.

I was especially glad to see Ora, even though the pilgrim pressure made it impossible for us to cover much ground. Still I was able to compare a few notes with her and she kindly assisted me in some local spelling problems, such as Kisatchie, which is the name of a National Forest in the hills behind Montrose where wild game preserves are included in the forestation. There are deer, wild turkeys and heaven knows what all. I thought with Cane River cutting diagonally across the proposed pictorial plate, it might be nice to have the words "Cane River Country, Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana" occupy that section, and in the opposite lower section of the place have a few trees and wild game to add whimsy to the composition. So much to talk about and yet how grateful I am for this little opportunity.....

5412

Tuesday, April 15th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I had to stop and think twice when I wrote the word, Tuesday, in the date line, for somehow I feel a whole week has elapsed since Sunday. Time has a way of whizzing anyway, but sometimes I am astonished at how much can be undertaken in the span of a day and thereby make it seem as though a whole flock of days had run their course between a single dawn and dusk.

As for any contribution made by my own efforts for the gaiety of humanity today, I can't think of anything I can chalk up for in reality I have merely lent encouragement to workmen who were actually sweating it out in a cool 71 degree temperature. But new fence posts had to be set on a section of fence at Arenbourg and a stout five and a half foot fence had to be erected as the barrier of the "avant-cour" at Yucca, with the result that I expended most of my energies going and coming and getting a little ways but of course never as far as one anticipates, although the Arenbourg posts are set and the new fence and gate in front of Yucca is three quarters finished.

I banged away for rather late on this machine last night, with the result that I "lay-long" this morning and found myself still in the bed at 5:30 when simultaneously there was a knocking on the boudoir door giving on the front gallery and on the window giving on the back. I had asked two stalwart youths to assist me early at Arenbourg and without encountering each other on their way, both had arrived at Yucca, --one from the front and one from the back at the same moment. It didn't take me long to slide into my trousers and boots but I suspect my shirt tail was snapping out behind as I headed up the road.

Both secretaries came this afternoon but I was too busy to see them and so I shall have to let the mail go for another day at least. There seems to be a fat letter from Daisey in the Dell, one from Helen cancelled from Waco, one from Madam Morris of Jacksonville, something from Dora and two or three non-descript items which are probably bread and butter numbers, --I hope.

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I intended enclosing the Judge Wilson copy in yesterday's post with Sister's letter, the Judge Wilson item having arrived in my mail at the same time Sister's letter came to hand. It didn't take me long to dash off a note to Judge Wilson, telling him his Osburn move was exceedingly unfortunate and that so far as any hopes of effecting his designs on the apron, that was definitely a waste of time, so far as I am concerned, since pressure of the nature employed guaranteed a short-circuit of all thought of the business under discussion. I send his letter along merely because I think you will be amused by the hocus-pokus tomfoolery full grown men employ in their lodge correspondence. Of course five-cent-cigars, with both feet on the ground, don't believe in such things as the trappings of royalty, but brother, can they lap up that Supreme Kleagle stuff or whatever the ridiculous "signs and wonders" names and titles they love to be-deck themselves out with.

I laugh at myself every time I think of having written you I was reading a book by Williams, entitled "Elephantville", for, after hearing the title repeated several times, I gather it is not "Elephantville" but "Elephant Bill", and I must say I think the latter dull enough. Perhaps the publisher was inspired by the exploits of the late Mr. Cody who was so long known as "Buffalo Bill" and thought Mr. William's last name might entitle him to some similar soubrquet. The book, and I like it very much, is laid in Burmah, and so if the thing had been called "Burmah Bill", the presence of a couple of big B's might have had some value, but "Elephant Bill" doesn't seem to do much for my imagination, although if some expert, devoting himself to skunks tosses off a symposium on those friendly little animals, I suppose some publisher will end up by calling the book "Skunk Bill" or "Pole Cat Bill" and then the "bill" mania for inclusion in titles out to be about played out.

Beth Williams Cloutier gave me a buzz this morning. She and Irma Somperyac Willard are planning this summer to contrive the 10 generations of Trudhemmes and descendants in side branches on parchment, of course, by hand, and the mistress of Beaufort wants to run down to consult with me on a couple of points before undertaking the job. She suggested Wednesday or Thursday and I said I didn't care which, for I have two appointments on Wednesday and three on Thursday, and I can sandwich her in with all comers, and get her on her way again the sooner by having the more people to muddy the waters. So things turn, and as for me, after a hot shower, I turn in to bed.....

5414

Wednesday, April 16th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The weather is marvelous.

I have only three armoires in this house, and it begins to look as though I had better round up a couple more, what with the mail stacking up. Yesterday's remains where it was and today's has been added to it. Fortunately none of it, I think, is of any particular moment, --I hope.

At the moment I find myself inundated by an excess of labor, none of which is capable of doing much without someone being present to tell precisely which bit of vegetation is in the plant class and which in the weed. The only reason I have too many hard hands and soft heads is because planting is going ahead full tilt and by modern methods, that job requires few workers. In another week I shall be unable to round up anybody inside the garden barriers, for every mother's son and daughter will be swinging a hoe as the endless rows of new cotton will need to be chopped out. And then the hoeing season will follow through and I shall be contemplating the impressive growth of weeds and wondering how it is that my labor supply always comes and goes in waves.

Aside from several scheduled appointments, there were two or three hatches of pilgrims, each succeeding set duller than that which had gone before.

But I was glad to sandwich in Mrs. Coombs for a few minutes between jumps. Last week, as I learned from Mrs. Wood the other day, she came pretty close to having pneumonia, but has now fully recovered and is beginning to plan moving into the new Coombs residence in town, which everyone says is as pretty a place as one is likely to see.

Her primary reason for stopping, aside from the social element, was to tell me of a mulatto youth in town, --some kind of Uncle Der, who appears to be unusually gifted with the meager paints which have come to his hand. I believe his mother is a servant in the Coombs menage. There are several children, I believe, and perhaps the father is dead. The

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boy who is 16 or 17 had to give up going to high school to help support the family. Although he never has had any adequate materials, he has tried painting with scraps of discarded paint tubes he has found, - using whatever cardboard he could find as canvas. Mrs. Coombs says some of his things are really excellent and adds that it is pitiful to see little pieces of cardboard bearing an example of his artistry, stuck timidly at the side of the grocery store showcase where the boy works, placed there by the boy, who hopes someone may want one ~~ix~~ and thus enable him through a sale to get some paints.

It seems she had mentioned Melrose to the boy and told him she would ask me if she might bring him down for a chat sometime. Naturally I told her I should be delighted. She asked when it would be convenient for me. I told her at precisely that moment when she and the youth could get away most conveniently. It's time for the African House gallery to have some new exhibitions, and I shall arrange one forthwith for this sepia Tintoreto or Magenta or whatever his name may be. A poor mulatto probably has too many cards stacked against him to ever get anywhere, but it would be so pleasant to give him a bit of encouragement. After all, it doesn't matter if he never does accomplish anything commercially if only some manifestation of interest in his efforts may provide him with the pleasure that must come with such a medium of self expression.

But, to get away from the subject of Art, you really should have seen the extraordinary rough sketch I packed off to Nina this morning, asking her if she might be in a position to put it into ship-shape black and white for the new plate. I liked the forest, - Kisatchi, - best, for the deer were larger than the trees, the turkeys like peacocks and the foxes as big as the deer. In short, it was a sight. I sent along an explanatory note, --I may find a copy which, if I do, I shall enclose, together with an endless letter. My inimitable sketch calls for the "legend: "Cane River Country --Natchitoches Parish -- Louisiana" to occupy the space at the upper right hand; Cane River bisects the design from upper left to lower right, and Kisatchie fills in the space at the lower left, but poor Nina will be quite justified if she responds with a flat No in trying to untangle my handiwork. But forgive me for all these no account details.....

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Thursday, April 17th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Another day of perfect weather and equally perfect hurly-burly. The weather man promises showers for the week end. So be it. Perhaps I shall get caught up on one thing or another, including the mail.

Today I got around to read only the enclosure. I am so glad Helen got a lot of rest during her curaise, for she really was vastly in need of it. She was perfectly right in assuming I would be surprised to see the article, for although I had assumed she might do some account of her jaunt around the Gulf, I scarcely anticipated she would preface the business with an account of this bend of the river.

Don't you love the account of her visit to little Miss Alberta and the latter's observation regarding the cats. And there was something about the way she handled little Miss Alberta's friend, the little man with the apron, that made me want to see him. Last night I was reminded of an evening in Manhattan years ago when I invited a few friends to my house to listen to the heavy weight boxing match between mein lieber Max Schmeling and somebody or other, perhaps Joe Lewis, and how my guests arrived just before the game was scheduled to go on the air, and how I withdrew momentarily to the pantry to see about cold beer and pretzels and how finally, a minute later, on returning to the living room, I was thunderstruck to learn that the fight was all over, having come to an abrupt end with a knock out before the first round really got to going good. History didn't repeat itself in many details last night, but I did invite several gentlemen of color to come by to listen to the middle weight champion bout between Sugar Ray Robinson and Graziano. We did manage to get a glass of wine-pour before the 2nd round started when Lo! a minute and 50 odd seconds after the 3rd round started, the knockout came and the main entertainment feature of the evening was over before it had really got well under way.

I saw Celeste for a few moments this morning. She reported a gay round of entertainment in South Louisiana. Weeks Hall came over to the Couragerehouse for a little visit and was kind enough to send a flock of nice messages by Celeste to me. She said Weeks didn't partake of any refreshments, as it

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is still difficult for him to manage his arms, due to the
brace he still wears to support his mended broken back.
The Tony Avarys also entertained for Celeste and she says their
home on a high knoll overlooking the Gulf is a marvellin
comfort and simplicity. I was busy at 9 o'clock coffee time, and
as she had some uninteresting parish friends and I was pressed
for time before the Knipmeyers arrived, I passed up the coffee bean,
and saw her but momentarily later in the morning when she passed
by to bring me a little gift. She found me whaling away in the
"avant-cour" which she seemed to like but which floored her a
little, too, I think, for while it represents nothing more than
pushing a few trees around and giving the place a line of demarkation
by means of the barrier, I think she was puzzled or stunned or
confused inasmuch as any undertaking, such as planting a bush
involves quite an expenditure of thought, nervous energy and
and exhaustion on her part. Somehow I get the impression she
can't quite believe that what she sees before her has been
accomplished with minor effort which makes it impossible for her
to believe that only a limited amount of labor has been expended
on the project.

I think I mentioned the other day that I expected to make use
of the harmless big old bumble bees, burrowing on the ceilings of
both galleries at Yucca to hasten the flight of tiresome pilgrims.
But now I find I shall have to think up some other subterfuge,
for all of a sudden all the bees have disappeared. A heavy
odor of D. D. T. filtered through the gardens today. I
think its origin must be attributed to the great tractor-tank
machine being used to spray the unfolding leaves on the pecanes all
over the plantation. The racket made by the contraption is
impressive but the D. D. T. acidity is cut by the heavy perfume
of the magnolia forscati, sweet olive and day lilies. For
human beings within the gardens it really isn't bad, but apparently
it is death to the bumble bees, and to my scheme for frightening
off dull pilgrims.

And of the latter I had my quota today, a curious assortment
in one party, including a Mr. and Mrs. Shay of Boston, along
with another Massachusettes lady and a nun, and the whole batch
must be tired tonight for the energies expended on something
that registered not at all on their comprehension. It will
always puzzle me why people put themselves through such tours
when they obviously haven't the slightest intellectual or
cultural capacity to understand what it is all about.

Tonight Ed. Morrow reported the D. A. R. girls actually have
petitioned Congress to send a delegation of Congressmen to count
the gold at Fort Knox. As usual, they seem to be worrying about gold
and not about people. Hope they select Mr. Taft, he would be fine....

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Dora 4/10/52
Daisy 4/11/52

Friday, April 18th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so, what with the weather man promising scattered
showers for the week end, and my mental processes concluding
there might be no pilgrims, I decided I would give way to
an impulse to bank Yucca in billions of blossoms for
the sheer whimsey of it.

And so at dawning I marched to Arenbourg where I
gathered seeds of white German iris and two armfuls of
Josephine lilies, making it necessary for me to make
two trips up and down the road to fetch all my plunder home.

But tonight the Chapel is heavy-heavy with the perfume
of the lilies and the fireplaces in both the living room and
boudoir are "wedged out" with blossoms, sometimes nearly white,
sometimes nearly all pink, and I must say the place looks as
though preparations were all "set" for either a wedding
or a funeral.

I have been cultivating some rather rare native iris on
the river bank, and I brought an armful of their pale blue
blossoms to sprinkle around with and through the boquets of
German iris, and the white sets off the blue to especial
advantage, while the larger contours of the white flowers
somehow give the suggestion that the more delicate
blue blossoms of the native ones are simply pale blue
butterflies, "hovering" about amidst the big white
globs and the thin sprays of greenery of their leaves.
It's all very pretty and all in very bad taste, - such an
abundance of horticultural loveliness, - or can one ever get
too many flowers scattered about when showers are predicted and
pilgrims may not put in an appearance.

At long last I got around to run through most
of my mail, and as anticipated, there was nothing of
much interest in any of it. I shall enclose one or

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two pieces herewith, --especially the long hand from Daisey in the Dell. I shall write her this week end but what I shall say, I know not. What she says about hanging the story on my personality is an error. To begin with, the point of the book was to get out some kind of a thing on Melrose, using the Madam more or less as the peg on which the tale might hang, although, as I recall, it was originally hoped the thing might be done in scrapbook form. Then the personality of the Marie Therese mistress started creeping in but perhaps she never did get much space. And now Dainsey in the Dell wants to introduce another personality and the thing before we know it is going to be cluttered up with people and heretofore of Melrose. As yet it doesn't seem to have dawned on little Miss Garber that she might well take needle and thread in hand and do a bit of stitching, --a word striching on the fabric. It seem so easy for her to tell me how I ought to contrive the thing but if she knew I had to wait days simply to be able to read her letter, I suppose she might better comprehend how impossible it is for me to attack the job she outlines so glimply.

But the poor thing is ill and perhaps when she eventually gets back to good health, she may appreciate the situation a little better, or I can make it quite plain to her when she pays that threatened visit as she heads for South Louisiana.

A couple of the Reverend Fathers from St. Augustin's Church telephoned to ask if they could come to see me sometime this afternoon. I was as busy as a hen a-settin', but they could come, and come they did. They are fiddling around with preparations for the celebration of the hundredth something or other of St. Augustin's, which will get under way along about next year, --June, 1953, I believe, and wanted to get some historical data from me. I still am a little vague about what they are fixing to beat the drum about since the Church was built in 1829 and was functioning right along from then on down. I felt like telling them the most salient feature of the summer of 1853 that I knew anything about concerning the religious set-up locally was the Yellow Fever devastation which ended up by impelling all the nuns to foresake the convent, thus making it possible for Celine to make it her home in later years. But they seemed to think whatever I gave them by way of other data was helpful, and they didn't know it, but they had given me an idea to do something about the business, but more of that at a later sitting. And so the week end begins and it is said the whole Wenk tribe will honor us either tomorrow or Sunday.....

Carolyn Rauscy 4/16
5420

Sunday, April 20th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your fat letter, one envelope enclosed within another, in Saturday's post. Both road through the mail sacks safely, and I need not say how entranced I am to have all.

And may I start out by saying how much I appreciate all particulars you shared with me regarding the hearth. I have contemplated that matter daily for ever so long, in full realization of the probable nerve strain that accompanies such situations. May I tell you with equal truth that vaguely in the back of my mind I was wondering if by some strange twist of Fate, a call might be forthcoming from off yonder where once Simon Bolivar was wont to roam. I don't reckon there is a chance, but what with Fiction out-done by Actuality on occasion, one's mind is certain never to keep abreast with potentials.

And may I thank you for giving me full details regarding the Anne Morgan will. Altogether it seems to be about as heartening a disposition of worldly goods as anything I can remember. Miss Boyd spoke of the Mount Kisco demise but I knew no details and somehow while we were speaking on that subject, we got off the track when someone interrupted and we never did get back.

I have a new name for certain Sundays, --each being called not Pal Sunday, but rather "Bomb Sunday" when, as so frequently, the whole Wenk tribe arrives, as was the case today.

Things didn't reach such a high pitch as sometimes, but even so, it was sufficiently vibrant to give me a splitting headache. There were many gifts, --a cake, much goose liver, tuna fish salade, chocolate milk and the Lord Know what all. There was also a snapshot of the Kate Chopin house, and that is what I wanted most, for now I shall be able to send it along for the finishing touches which I trust Nina is making on the Cane River Country pictorial map.

And speaking of the latter, I want to ask this question, to which I trust you will respond quite frankly. Would it be better

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for me to have Robina have the sketch photographed for me than bothering to send it to Manhattan. I know Robina has good photographic facilities, although I am not sure if the work is executed locally or is sent away. If it is a little bit difficult, in view of hearth-side arrangements and the somewhat crowded situation at the office, so that handling the thing would put you in a bit of a pinch, just let me know, and I shall mail the sketch, --when and if completed either to Shreveport or to you, and you know I shall understand perfectly if you think that under momentary conditions in Manhattan, it would best to have the thing photographed nearer this bend of the river. I am hoping Nina may have the thing done by the middle of May, and I want to get it photographed as soon afterward as possible, so I may send the photograph to Edwards of Baltimore, so that work on the plate can get under way as soon as possible. I want to avoid the disappointment I experienced last year in having the business drag until after the holidays, and as Natchitoches will probably have crowds about December 1st for the opening of the annual Christmas festival, it would be advantageous, no doubt, to have this item available at that time. I should imagine I might expect Nina to have it done by June 1st at the latest, but one never knows. In case she doesn't come through, I shall enlist the services of Robert Deblieux, and thus still get the thing in hand in ample time, I hope. So please be quite frank about this matter, for it will be as easy for me to mail the sketch to Shreveport as anywhere, but I enlist your cooperation merely because for purely sentimental reasons, I like to share whenever possible such undertakings with just one person. But in the event that things are a little tight at the moment, please let me know and be assured I shall understand perfectly.

You were right about the photograph I mentioned of the books in my drawing room. The photo I had in mind was of the stack at the right of the fireplace, and it was simply of the shelves, and nothing else. I'll cast about for it, and if I run it down, will send it along to you to keep in your file.

From the enclosure, I take it there is scant chance Carolyn will hit Moscow before another frost comes round. I shall write her, giving her the boy friend's Paris address, and send along a letter with it, --addressed to him. If Carolyn does get here in May or June, all well and fine, but that would scarcely give much opportunity to work on the article before she returns from Europe, and so I don't care which way the thing turns. She is a grand girl but lacks that most virtuous of virtues, --dependability.

And may I say thanks for all the noble enclosures which I shall use, and also thanks for the Colfax-da Vinci anniversary particulars, neither of which I knew. Your letter has made my week end so happy...

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Monday, April 21st, 1952.

Memorandum:

Just to start off on a sour note, --at supper J. H. said:

"Oh, by the way, some fellow telephoned long distance from somewhere, asking if he could take photographs here tomorrow. I told him it was alright. You haven't any appointments for tomorrow have you."

"What was the man's name," I queried.

"I don't remember....nobody I had ever heard of before.... Possibly Laughlin or something like that. Why do you know anybody with a name sounding like that."

"I do. But I wish I didn't."

"Well, Lord, now I remember that you did say something about someone being a bag. Well, do what you please with him. I forgot."

In truth I think he did, but something tells me Mr. Laughlin won't forget me very soon, following tomorrow's sundown.

It was a misty dawn at this bend of the river today, and an excellent time to transplant things which never should be transplanted this late in the season, and so I set a new line of nandinas at Arenouburg and fifty odd like plants around the new picket fence of the avant-cour at Yucca, all before the mists evaporated and a semi-cloudy day made its bow. Tonight the sky is clear but the weather man promises scattered showers for this area, and I am holding the thought a few of them may get scattered slap along the line of the new hedges.

There were guests for supper, --two or three old friends of the family. Unwittingly they made one of those "better-left-unsaid" things as they headed down the brick walk toward the front gallery. The walk is really quite lovely at the moment bordered on each side by dozens of great golden day lilies, taller than usual, --perhaps three to four

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feet above ground. And sprinkled through these are unusually virile poppies, --from powder pink to pale tomato, as tall as the day lilies and each plant unfolding marvelously delectable petals on the dozen or so blossom each plant supports. I have never seen them more luxuriant. And interspersed tall, tall Milk and Wine lilies, adding just the right note to the various pinks and yellows, and the variety of greens from the lettuce-like shade of the poppies to the deep emerald of the day lilies.

Addressing themselves to nobody in particular, although J. and Dan were present, they exclaimed:

"Never have the gardens looked so marvelous. You must have been giving them especial attention this year, Francois."

Naturally I covered by laying the whole thing on the Lord and the mild winter, which, after all is putting credit where credit is due, although perhaps the effect of the borders along the brick walk this year are a little more striking because a lot of harmoniously contrasting plants, formerly scattered more widely, are producing a different impression this spring because of their concentration. Both speakers, however, are five cent cigar business men, and their implied bouquet was a surprise, since they are not the type conscious of unusual colorings in any garden.

But before bringing this Memo to a close, let me rush headlong into setting forth an idea: -- to wit, that in view of all the birthday celebrations at Arenbourg this year, we might charge them off as against any parallel celebrations for others, --did I say during the impending month, and thus give circumstances centering around the domestic hearth an opportunity to change for the better before opening any bottles of champagne. I express myself with unusually bad grace tonight but I know you will understand my motive which is to make things as easy all the way around, and if by skipping this year's natal day observances, we shall do so in full realization that actually they have been celebrated billions of times previously throughout the past twelfth month, and when things take on a rosier glow a little later, we can always pick up the thread where it was temporarily held in abeyance. It just occurs to me I am throwing out this suggestion pretty late, but if it isn't too late, and it holds any measure of easing any efforts, do by all means let us lay hold upon it for everybody's sake and most of all for little Miss Lee's.

How sweet is the friendship that enables discussion of everything with the unflinching understanding that goes to make for such perfection.....

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Tuesday, April 22nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so the day dawned misty and warm, and remained just that way throughout.

Naturally I was delighted, since I thought it would add scant comfort to the Laughlin duo. They had said they were coming early, and as I have no idea what Laughlin's idea of early might be, I suppose 11:15 was early as he measures time.

He had the same gril with him who had come last time, and she must be crazy to have permitted California to get between her and him, and then actually resume relations.

Laughlin and she both were all charm and I was all "froideur". He asked about the Clemence paintings and said I had never told them about them on any of his previous visits. I told him that was quite true, although I had called his attention to the Gane River Gobelin and he had manifested no interest whatsoever. He said he didn't know about her at the time. I don't know how he usually finds out about such matters. Actually I suppose he must have heard someone beat the drum about her creations and belatedly decided there was something to her things after all. He asked if he might see any examples. I told him he could, that they were upstairs in the African House. He asked if he could take some colored films of them. I told him they were there for everyone to be enjoyed and if he wished to film them he might. He spent the next five hours working on them, and secretly I was enchanted because I am glad they will be recorded but I wouldn't give him the slightest hint that I cared what he did. I never saw him again until he was leaving when he said he would be back on the morrow to see other examples of the Clemence creations, as someone had told him I had an excellent one in my bathroom. I told him I did, and that he probably remembered seeing it there last summer when, in expressly ignoring my request that he not violate the sanctity of that room, he had done so, and

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that Yucca would not be open on the morrow for any picture taking and that that picture was not to be recorded. As I hoped, that was precisely the one he wanted to reproduce most, and primarily because I had set up a road block. He said Mr. Henry had told him he might take pictures inside the house. I told him Mr. Henry possibly referred to Melrose but that even Mr. J. A. didn't have any say-so about what was photographic material and what was not in my house, and that I had already decided on that point and it was final. He drew in his horns at that and promised to be back on the morrow, and so, it appears, he hasn't learned yet he is dealing with a mule.

But why do I spend so much time on such a splendid photographer and such a bag of a human being.

The weather was so perfect for transplanting things, even though the calendar was all out of joint for such undertakings that I simply transplanted. All the nandina set out yesterday was as fresh and green and pretty this morning as before they were moved, and today's damps and dews have further confirmed their new lease on life, giving every indication they don't even realize they have been moved. I dug up a flock of crepe myrtle, some in full leaf, and some althias also in complete greenery, and gave them new residences. The althias seemed to droop a little but they will make it alright, I believe, and the crepe myrtles look as crisp as the nandinas.

By much fanfare, a couple of Baptist potentates passed this way by special appointment. The ladies were fairly intelligent and one of the "Men of God" seemed to be culturally capable of comprehending what he saw, but as for the other, the tour was just another of those "psalms to a dead mule".

A year or more back I may have mentioned a wood carving youth of African ancestry who specializes in making wonderfully perfect toy automobiles. I never could get him interested in anything save that subject, but now I have asked him to fashion me a couple of simple wooden crosses, and I am told he with whittling mightily tonight on the same with a view of coming to see me with them tomorrow evening after school. I thought they might find a place below St. Veronica's Veil, just suspended on the old cypress beam, half imbedded in mud. I shall be interested in seeing how they turn out, for I am hoping that this initial digression away from the Detroit influence may open a new avenue of expression that will ultimately give much satisfaction to the artist, I hope.....

5426

Wednesday, April 23rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so Celeste went to town early to get herself made beautiful in anticipation of a week end frolic in South Louisiana, and accordingly Madam Regard and I had coffee by ourselves.

And Madam Regard, speaking of little Miss Lee, said:

"Francois, if I only had the gift to express myself so beautifully as she, I should consider myself fortunate indeed. A day or two ago I had the loveliest note anyone ever received from one whom I felt so drawn to the moment I first saw her, and one whose greatness of heart is so wonderfully balanced by such intelligence. I cannot tell you how touched I was by such a beautiful expression of love and affection."

And so little Miss Lee can march to the head of the class, and I don't mind saying my own heart felt the warmer because of this example of genuine pleasure which one loved one had brought to another.

And while speaking of admirable personalities, I have recently stumbled over a radio personality that reminds me so much of the Anne Harding type. Her name is Jane Pickins, I believe. I gather she has a 15 minute program over the National system sometime during the day, although I hear her only at midnight 'til 12:15 in a re-broadcast over W H O, Des Moines.

I find no similarity between the Pickins and Harding voices, and yet by some miracle there is some quality in the spoken word that brings forth an almost perfect mental picture of the physical impression of the other individual.

The Laughlins came early again, --2:30. The weather, misty all afternoon, with only occasional gleams of sunshine breaking through, wasn't any more cooperative than I. But the man told me he got a good picture of the Frankly stove, which is probably true, and if so, it represents an accomplishment, since that bit of furniture isn't easy to record on film, I imagine. Mr. Laughlin offered to bring his photographs for me to see, but I declined on some trumped up grounds. But J. A. took time out to look at them and found them very good, and it must be said the man is an excellent artist.

5427

Whenever I think of him, I am reminded of that episode that transpired in the Tuileries at the height of the 1st Empire. Napoleon, furious at Talleyrand for having been up so some chicanery, denounced him mightily before the entire court. Talleyrand muttered something in his beard by way of come-back and the Emperor asked him to repeat what he had said, to which Talleyrand acceded modulated by suavely remarking:

"Sire, I was simply remarking what a great pit it is that such a great man should have been so miserably brought up."

Mrs. Maybury of Shreveport dropped by around 3 o'clock, bringing a copy of The Atlantic Monthly which contained some articles she wanted to read to me at some subsequent sitting. Although she was never here but once before, she somehow gave me the impression she had decided to take me over for a bit of mothering. She has a 12 year old granddaughter she wants to bring down sometime if I will talk with the child who wants to do an article on Cane River. A child of such an age seems a bit immature for going into the mysteries of the cafe au lait coloring obtaining in this area, but perhaps, like all grandchildren, she is exceptional. On the mothering side, la Marbury explained that the other night she awoke, possessed of the feeling that there is something pitiful about me being all alone out here behind all this shrubbery from dusk 'til dawn, and that I ought to have some means of summoning people, should I need anyone at midnight. Accordingly on the following morning she purchased a big dinner bell and is now in the process of covering the same with a rag doll figure, somewhat in the manner of Aunt Jemima. I gather, and she threatens to present the same to me on Friday. She feels Aunt Jemima will be a source of vast comfort to me in re-assuring me that whenever I need help, all I have to do is grab her and take up the semblance of the role of Town Crier. It is certainly kind of the lady to be so concerned and to do something about it but something tells me Aunt Jemima will be more of a decorative piece than a utilitarian object.

In the matter of the plate of the Cane River Country, I think I shall have the thing registered in some fashion. I laughed to myself when I couldn't decide if the thing should be copyrighted or patented. There isn't the slightest chance that anybody would ever use the design to our disadvantage, but perhaps the presence of a copyright notice on the item may give the item itself a seemingly more precious quality in the minds of prospective purchasers.

The gardening business goes on apace, and thanks to the three and a quarter inches of rain of yesterday, plus the bright blue weather, with heat, promised for the balance of the week, greenery ought to be oozing.....

5428

Thursday, April 24th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A lovely day with the prospect of similar ones straight ahead. Madam Cloutier, as remiss in carrying out intentions as in correspondence, failed to keep her appointment. In fact, by some miracle, nobody showed up, which means I had better try to get a good night's sleep in anticipation of an inundation on the morrow.

It was good to hear from Helen again so soon, and I'll enclose herewith or under separate cover her letter along with the second installment of her account of her Gulf cruise. I asked her to send a couple extra ones of the first article, thinking Dora, la Storm and Mr. Belle might find certain paragraphs amusing, such as the observation of little Miss Alberta on the cat situation, since all of them are acquainted with that lady, and naturally they might get even more entertainment out of the episode of the naming of the child.

And speaking of children, I have a great big new baby on my hands in the form of an embryo secretary. Y. C. plans to go to Shreveport to push a lawn mower during the summer just as soon as his St. Mathew's school is out about 3 weeks hence. He hopes to continue his education up yonder when school re-opens in the autumn and so it behoves me to cast about for someone to take his place. As I figure it, if I wait until school has closed, every mother's son will be swinging a hoe in the cotton fields, and with easy money scattered about, secretarial jobs would have scant appeal.

Ezra told me his boy could read a little and so he passed this way today, and seemed to get along pretty well. At least he knows the letters of the alphabet, which is more than I can say for Junior Fugabou, poor child, who never will get that mystery solved.

It had been several months since I had seen Lee, --of all names, --under the circumstances, --although I am sure no kin to the other, --and I was a little taken aback when this 14 year old youth loomed on my threshold, towering perhaps 6 inches more than six feet in height. At the rate

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3889, 4325, 1174, 100000

he is going in a vertical direction, he really ought to be quite a man by the time he reaches full maturity. If he makes a go of his new job, I shall have to get Carolyn or Helen to take a picture of us together, after the manner of Mr. Brew and me ~~year~~ years ago, only in that case Mr. Brew was definitely on the smaller half of the human duo, whereas in contrast, Lee and I ought to present a rough suggestion of a Singer midget and or along side an Ethiopian Cardiff Giant.

By someone in Natchitoches, passing through the dogwood glade of Briarwood, a batch of Philippine lilies for me were sent to town, transferred to Raynie's car, and thence delivered to me this noon. They are fine plants, perhaps 4 inches high, and as they retained ample earth about their roots, I have no doubt they will grow right along without sensing they have been whisked around the country at such a great rate. I waited until nearly sundown to put them in the ground, half on the northwest side of la maison de la reine, and the balance at the East end of Yucca, perhaps 8 feet from the Chapel. When they blossom in July, I shall cut the Arenbourg ones immediately to give additional strength to the roots in that garden, but shall let the Yucca ones flower with abandon, since their snowy glory will entrance pilgrims and communicants alike, for one will see them from the entrance of the Chapel, --as one glances straight ahead with the gorgeous breids, blues and amethysts of the stained glass window giving an unusual value to their classic elegance and simplicity. In the rich Cane River soil, these lilies usually attain a height of 7 or 8 feet and as the ground where they are planted is about a foot below the level of the Chapel floor, their appearance ought to be quite striking through the stained glass as one enters the sanctum.

What with last winter having been the mildest on record, and everything in the world of vegetation being weeks ahead of time, I am puzzled as to why the bananas seem to be about a month behind schedule. At Arenbourg they are definitely ahead of the Yucca and Melrose groves, but even so they are not making the strides they should. In speculating with one of my most untutored friends on the subject, I was enchanted with the observation he brought forth: -

"It sure must be them bananas is yit fooli' round, awaitin' for dat cold to come what ne'er did make it."

And now I must take a whack at the mail, and then fold up by beard in anticipation of a hurly-burly tomorrow.....

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Alberta's death
4/27/52

Friday, April 25th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so, as you have perhaps already noticed from the press or the enclosed clipping, Miss Alberta is dead.

Oddly enough, she, who was always so cagey about her age, should have it blazoned forth so prominently in her obituary. But from her cloud, she probably looks down, peeping over the shoulders of the readers, and with a new sense of values as to the agelessness of her personality, is at long last getting a hearty chuckle over the information.

And how fortunate she was in dying as she did. No one ever probably disdained doctors, medicine and castor oil more than little Miss A. and somehow it is fitting that she could have passed away in her own house, the house she loved so much, and never had to go through the rigors of being handled by physicians at 823 Royal or fiddled with by nurses in a hospital. Undoubtedly she often would have benefited mightily by a real doctor's attention but since she didn't like them, she was perhaps unique in having lived 77 years without ever having had to consult one.

At supper, J. A. told me there was an excellent editorial in the same Picayune that carried the news of her death. I searched for the paper but it had been destroyed. It would be nice to have for your scrapbook and I shall try to round up a copy in town, but there is probably scant hope of finding one. The date on the clipping will possibly enable you to find a copy at your local favorite out of town newspaper stand.

Coincidences are always arresting and I like this one particularly. On Wednesday I dropped her a note saying the first big grandiflora magnolias were beginning to unfold on the old tree by the side gate and recommending that she fold up her traps and head in this direction. There is something rather nice about it, --that the tree whose blossoms she liked best to paint, should have blossomed on the same day she died. Only a day or so ago, if memory serves, I was pondering on why the bananas were awaddling about so languishingly this year, after such a mild winter. I might have said the same about the Old Faithful grandiflora which opened in 1945 on April 12th, --how well I remember. It seemed to

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me they were delaying without excuse in 1952. But now I think they were so right, just to make a lovely sentimental coincidence.

Mrs. Maybry or whatever her name is, passed this way this afternoon alone. She brought the Aunt Jemima bell. She styled it a large one, --about 2 inches across the base, but accustomed as I am to the big old dinner bell sitting on the front gallery of the big house, it didn't seem too big. But the covering was charmingly contrived by her own hand and I shall keep it with the last one Blythe sent me for a while, since it will please the lady who gave it when she passes this way with her granddaughter on May 16th or 17th. She brought a carton of cigarettes and some other item which, at the moment, I can't for the life of me recall. I felt sorry for her. Like Maud Pattison, she is all wrapped up in herself, but unlike Maud, she is apparently generous to the point of effusiveness. She unburdened her current love affair to me, -- the 80 year old lawyer who had handled her husband's estate for her at the time of the latter's death. She says this man is really madly in love with her but is too timid to admit it. He proved the point by telling me she had a post card from him, written at the Waldorf a while back, and she could just tell he was dying to see her. She immediately wired him she was flying to New York and would be at the Waldorf within 12 hours. She arrived and found a note from him, saying he was sorry he had been suddenly called away on business and "because of his timidity" he didn't tell her where he had gone. She said her telephone number is Shreveport 4-6770 and that if I would ever need her or anything her half million could procure, I was to telephone her anytime, day or night. Poor la Maybry. I don't mind saying I wasn't sorry when another appointment terminated our sitting. After she had departed, one of the gentlemen remarked upon the quality of the lady's diamonds. Diamonds at noonday seem a little odd but I suppose that is all the lady has, except a daughter and grandchild, a home in some fashionable suburb and the ability to make people scatter when she, dying for companionship, puts in an appearance. And back in the woods is the negro youth carver of wood but without money enough to buy tools while in Natchitoches, the embryo mulatto da Vinci delivers groceries because he hasn't the few dollars it takes to go to school while la Maybry, easing back toward Shreveport in her sleek new limousine, still a-drip with diamonds is so much poorer than they that her poverty cannot be computed.

An hodge-podge letter about hodge-podge assortments of people and after pondering the matter over not at all, I come up with the impression that probably little Miss Alberta was among the world's more successful people for she gave herself to people through the medium of her brush, and rounded out her cycle by realizing the major portion of her dreams.....

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Sunday, April 27th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Tuesday letter in the Saturday post. It was such a pleasant chat and I was especially touched by your reveries in the Hollis garden. I have a feeling if given a choice, you would have much preferred to spend the day day at home but it is good to know the enforced outing held in it the setting and opportunity for such speculations.

Late this afternoon, fortified by a huge old hob-nail glass of cafe-au-lait, I indulged in an equally pleasant half hour of speculations, seated on an old bench, --only Die Frau along side, --beneath the grandiflora in the avant-cour, the subdued, slanting rays of the fading sun mellowing the surroundings and playing pretty patterns of light and shade about me. I reckon I need point out in which direction my thoughts traveled.

From the smaller enclosure, you will note we were able to secure a copy of the Times-Picayune editorial on little Miss Alberta. I am sorry it bears no date, but as it appeared on the same day as her obituary, --I believe that was Thursday, April 24th, 1952, it ought to go along nicely with the obituary notice already sent. Come to think of it, the editorial must have been already prepared in advance, as is the custom for newspapers to do in what the profession is pleased to call its "morgue", I believe. Lyle used to talk about "bringing the morgue up to date". In connection with that, he used to talk about the Bulletin Board he and his associates on the Picayune used to keep immediately above the "morgue files". The heading on the Board read simply:

"Those We Wish Were....." --

and it was the habit of the various staff members to inscribe on that Board the names of various and sundry living individuals whom this one or that one, --and sometimes the whole membership wished might accommodate them by providing an opportunity for the files below to be opened to pass along to the presses their already prepared death notices. Although he never claimed to have originated the Bulletin Board, I have heard from others that it was his idea. Surely it must be said Lyle was a sight.

The other clipping J. gave me Saturday. I am under the impression it may be two or three months old and perhaps you have already had it. I didn't read it, but for the

Clipping on
Hollis
with picture of
Chapel

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caption, which I thought mildly amusing, --"The African House"
neath the Kleiser rendition of the Chapel of the Blessed Martin.

Bright sunshine has been the order of the day throughout
the weekend, and although there were a few pilgrims, I can't
lay my lack of accomplishments at their door, at least not
directly, for I disposed of the few who came with dispatch.
I even had three secretaries during this morning but they
were employed primarily in straightening out accumulated stuff
and I still have half a dozen long-ish letters unread in my
armoire, none of importance, I hope, as from Beth Mead and
the like.

Yesterday Alton Johnson, came to see me. He is the colored
boy, --a negro, --who is rather remarkable in the wood carving
he has executed during his first 16 years. I may have mentioned
he won a hundred dollars last year for a wooden model of a car
he made in some kind of a contest sponsored by General Motors.
He had brought a couple of crosses, fashioned for the Chapel,
and wanted to discuss other objects that might lend themselves
to artistic appeal. I had a few examples of 16th century
heads of Christ which he viewed with admiration. I showed him
the hand made furniture in the big house and suggested
several items such as birds, animals, miniatures of St.
Giggin's Fountain, the African House and so on that might
lend themselves to his industry. What I am hoping to do is
combine a wood craft and painting show in the African House
later in the year, using the mulatto descendant of Marie Therese
for the painting, --the grocery store da Vinci of color for
the one and this embryo Angelo of the cotton patch for the other.
We may or may not get somewhere, but it is pleasant to encourage
these youths in their artistic expression since probably neither
of them gets more than tacit approval from any quarter, and
probably they are often discouraged by parents or associates
who count their endeavors in this field as sheer tom foolery.

Of course it was "Bomb" Sunday, but as the Wenks were
planning much entertaining the first three days of this week, --
the Louisiana Medical Society is meeting in Shreveport, --they
only remained long enough to addle the soup and sour the coffee,
and were off again. The Shreveport papers had carried notices
of little Miss A.'s death, but in their mad whirl through life,
they, of course, hadn't heard of it until they came to Melrose.

The ladies across the fence drew in about first dark tonight,
reporting a wonderful frolic in South Louisiana. Impending
parties on the home front are matters of primary importance
and Marie Antoinette cuts another deck of cards.....

Jess. Campbell
4/24/52
5434

Monday, April 28th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A lovely day and I made the most of the dew at dawning
by pulling weeds at Arenbourg. On my way back to Melrose,
I turned back at the side gate to pull one more weed.
A muffled little cry wailed from near where my hand grasped
at the base of the stalk. I looked a little more closely
and discovered I had grasped the foot of a little rabbit
as my hand had encircled the weed. He was a little fellow,
probably not more than ten days old. I picked him up and
he stopped screaming and remained perfectly still as I stroked
his soft little head, not so big around as a quarter. After
a moment I put back on the ground and he hesitated for a moment,--
and then scurried off. There wasn't anything important
about the episode but it was ever so pleasant.

At the outset I intended saying yesterday's memo should
reach you at the same time this one does. I made my rounds
at the office at the usual time, but the postman had already
come and gone. I sent a batch of letters in to town for posting
later in the morning, but held out the memo, preferring it to
go through the usual channels.

The out-going mail was unusually heavy because I felt
nearly everyone who had acquired a Kinsey canvas would be
interested in a brief account of her death and those living
outside the Delta region might not discover any obituary
in their local papers. Yesterday morning I ran through
some Guests Books and Address Books and was surprised to
discover the names of 137 people passing this way whom I
had sent to little Miss A.'s studio, and of that number there
were 84 who I had been advised had purchased one at least
of little Miss A.'s creations. I was surprised at the number,
and that doesn't include people like the Harnesses, who, in
turn, had sent others whom I did not know to 823 Royal.
I didn't write to all of these people, but I did get out
notes to more than half, and I shall send a few more notices from
day to day during the balance of the week.

I was particularly interested to learn from a New Orleans
pilgrim, passing this way today, that on Friday a studio
which on Wednesday had two Kinseys on view, priced at \$85.00

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each had disposed of them both at \$125.00 each on Saturday. I am so happy to know you have examples of her artistry. Surely those who knew little Miss Alberta will find them doubly value for the association of the canvas with its creator, but even the casual art fancier of our generation will cherish them as about the best examples of Louisiana painting during the first half of the 20th century.

I like Robina's remarks regarding little Miss A., and in her terse fashion, I think she has summed up the personality very neatly.

Somehow I got the impression we would be hearing from the Campbells, and Lo! the enclosure came in today's post. They are altogether grand people and in a way, --and I don't think it is the fishing influence, -- they remind me of the Harnesses. I suppose the package referred to in their letter will come to hand shortly. It is the receipt of letters such as the Campbell's that inspires one with the belief that the time invested in bothering with numb-skulls isn't all wasted, since if all pilgrims were forbidden entrance, one would not only be freed from the dullards, but at the same time one would never get to know the Campbells, and suely they are the salt of the earth.

I'm glad I haven't a y histories or biographies to read tonight. There is a delicious waxing moon in the Northwest, slanting its soft light across the white pillars of Yucca on the white garden side. Die "ra u is sitting on the shelf just beyond the glass here at my window, peeping at the gold fish and glancing through the pane and me now and then as though suggesting a musicale might be in order and that she would mind nestling up on my lap. I feel hunry for a bit of Lehar, Tchaikovski and Strauss, and after I have knocked off a few letters, I think I shall joint her for an hour's rest and relaxation before calling it a day.

I am wondering how your radio programs are unfolding tonight, what with Daylight Savings have made it bow yesterday. Frankly I was mildly surprised when I caught Edward R. "orrow at the usual time tonight, for I half suspected I would have to go fishing for him an hour earlier or later, but there he was slap on the dot at 5:45, plantation time, and I find myself wondering why it is I have always been such a dunce about getting straight something which in reality must be quite simple, --the Eastern seaboard's enthusiasm for tinkering with the clock a couple of times a year. However that may be, may the new radio time, --if any, confuse you not at all but I reckon the good programs will be doing their seasonal fading shortly anyway.....

Norma and
Bob Campbell
For World

Daisy Dell 4/27

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Tuesday, April 29th, 1952.

Memorandum:

"Mais voyez-vous, la-bas, --la Chapelle et la croix balancante."

Thus sapke one of my dusky bi-lingual neighbors to a companion as they came on the gallery of Yucca from which I had just removed a step-ladder, after hanging a wooden cross on the set of deer horns just above the chapel door.

And so for that moment, at least, the Chapel of the Blessed "artin, became the Chapel of the "winging Cross.

The chain of the rosarie on which the cross hangs is of fish line, with knots to indicate the places usually occupied by beads. I had hung one cross just inside the door, a foot above the holy water font. The other one, above the door was suspended in such a manner as to be touched gently by the double doors as they are opened or closed, and the contact of course sets the cross, thus suspended, to "winging. I believe the code of the Fifth Avenue Association prevents display windows on the avenue from introducing any moving object, but since "elrose is far from Manhattan, I think there will be no protest regarding "la croix balancante", and I must say its modest gyrations add a gay note to the setting.

One more point about the cross while I am on that subject. I might have expected a negro to give a special and unexpected twist to the creation of the thing, since negroes intuitively seem able to give everything an individual twist. But when the 16 year old Alton Johnson presented them to me last Saturday, I noticed about them, --that they were merely a couple of crosses of plain wood, beautifully smooth in their natural state. But this morning as I was adjusting each to its new station, I sensed the presence of a touch of decor that and entirely escaped me until then, it was so subtle. Slap at the intersection of the two pieces of wood my finger detected a star delicately carved into the surface. The keener eyes of my dusky visitors this morning noticed it even before I had pointed it out. For all I know, there may be millions of crosses in the world with a star carved on them, but I have never chanced to see one, and in view of the youth of the carver and his limited experience with religious objects, you may be quite sure he never saw such a thing. But that of course is what makes the cross quite special, both

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because its fashioner wanted to put a special stamp on it, and even more fascinating it becomes because one would like to know what mental process or inspiration impelled the use of it. My guess is that there is some span in the youth's imagination between Bethlehem and Calvary but your guess is as good as mine and probably neither of us would ever be able to follow through the artist's mental process that arrived to such an end.

The morning post brought a flock of letters that inclined to "put me up a tree". At least a rather large one did, with a letter, a couple of pages long, from Carolyn, along with another page of questions, plus 30 or 40 pages incorporating the salient features of the material already supplied her and somehow folded into an article. The questions are easily enough answered, -- historical points, but following her admonition to run through the entire article first without stopping, and then go back and elucidate on check places presents something of a problem, what with the uncertain state of the secretariat. But I shall contrive the business somehow, and I doubt if there is much rush about it anyway, for although she still refers to a June visit, the word "September" crept in as an alternative, and I reckon that is about when I shall first see her, if indeed then.

Today the thermometer, under blue skies and radiant sunshine, moved up a few points and summer seemed to make her bow. The impression was confirmed, along about three o'clock this afternoon when the first pair of orioles arrived. I halted operations and found myself a bench in the shade when the first liquid notes came spilling over the top of the great oak. I invited a passing field hand, bent on quenching his thirst at the cistern to join me, and over a cold coke, we observed the initial operations of our feathered friends. The center of their interest was on a big old pecan in the iris garden. Last winter a huge limb had been blown down and I had found an oriole's nest among the twigs as they were being carried away. I suppose it must have been the 1951 residence of the pair, for obviously that particular tree was their center of gravity, and yet they seemed a little puzzled in not locating their former home. The male bird kept inspecting the west side of the tree, his musical notes bubbling forth unceasingly. The female remained adamant on the east side of the tree, making not a murmur, but obviously determined that at least had been the original sight, as, indeed, it had been. Call as he would, she wouldn't budge from her side of the tree. He even tried to push her off her branch, but got nowhere with that, and so finally a compromise was effected and the last I saw was a piece of string disappearing up on the South side and the summer season had obviously opened.....

Nina 4/26/52
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Wednesday, April 30th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Friday-Saturday letter with enclosures in today's post. Needless to say I have enjoyed every line of the former and have safely tucked away the balance in my armoire, what with an interruption impelling my noon secretary to fly out to the cotton patch at the stroke of the plantation bell. The five o'clock secretaries found a guest here and so withdrew without assisting me to carry through to the end of the enclosures, but I don't mind that, for there is the added pleasure of looking forward to your handiwork again on the morrow.

And may I say how nobly you stated the case of the handling of the photographic work for the sketch. Somehow there is something akin to what Nina wrote in her original letter regarding the matter, in that you both somehow succeed in conveying the impression that it is not you but I who am conferring the favor, which, it must be admitted in all fairness, is perfectly sweet of you both, but quite at variance with actuality, since it is I who am the recipient, not you. But before going further, I want to inquire about a point that passed through my mind the other day: - would it be possible for you to ask Kodak to mail the sketch and a print or two to me direct, thereby saving you the necessity of having to pack them and toat them to the post office. I imagine they must do a lot of out of town business, and if this could be accomplished through their own organization, thereby saving you the additional worry and labor, I should feel greatly relieved.

As for the print, I trust you will retain the negative, but I shall require but a single print, preferably 8" by 10" glossy, to submit to the Maryland manufacturers. I am sure the latter will require but a single print, and unless you hear from me to the contrary, it might as well be sent direct to me. If, on the other hand, Nina should dawdle and time should become short, I might send you a letter for the manufacturer so that you may post it at the same time the print is posted directly to Maryland. But unless I bring up this additional burden at some subsequent sitting, the single print might just as well be posted straight back to me. I shall repeat this request when I forward the sketch, so you need not clutter up your mind with any of

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the above points at the moment.

I enclose Mina's letter which reached me in today's post. I have never known Mina to be adamant about anything in this world, save size for sketches. By this writing, I have written her again, sayin the size doesn't matter, but that she might do in on a square-ish layout if convenient, say 18" by 24 or some such, and apparently giving her too much latitude. Perhaps this inclination for ~~precise~~ preciseness stems from two cause, first on the charity side, because of school traing, and secondly (on the less charitable side) because the call for details provides the perfect excuse wanted to explain away procrastination, which may be the reason why such a gifted artist doesn't produce more. Be that as it may, in my original letter on the Cane River Country business I mentioned a time limit as of May 15th, and in making acknowledgement of today's letter, I shall repeat the dead line and refer to a other letter she must have received by now.

Dr. Rand came to see me at 4. He said Blythe was on some kind of a frolic in South Louisiana. He said he thought it had been too long since we had had an old fashioned chat and so had skipped the camp and come here. The ensuing two hours were pleasant, in which we did everything from the Dormons to the drunks and back again. He spoke of the time he had contrived to secure a series of lectures for Caroline at \$2,500.00 to be given at Southwestern, --28 in all per year, each lasting an hour, or more is she felt so disposed, on any botanical subject she wanted to select for each. To his surprise, Caroline, although free as a bird on the wing, had no time for such nonsense. No wonder the lady doctor can whistle for her professional fees.

I got brushed up on Asiatic affairs quite unexpectedly last night when Harry Couteau tapped at my door at midnight. Once as a boy he had been employed by the "enks and had been badly treated by them. Birth certificates being non-existent in these parts, at the time of his birth, he didn't have much difficulty getting into the "avy during his tender years. Now I guess he must be about 20. He had just touched Cane River on a furlough covering years and no end of mileage and he wanted to sum up his impressions with someone whom he felt was both sympathetic and understanding. His childhood interests had, among other things, given him a rough knowledge of typing on an old Underwood, and because, as he said, he "had luck", and as I say, because he as a keen mind, he landed himself a comfortable birth on a destroyer and appears to have remembered all details of a hundred far flung places. I learned more about naval operations in Korea in two hours than years of radio listening had provided. Some ody had told him about the Chapel. At 2 a.m., he lighted a candle, knelt in prayer for a moment, and then said goodbye, --and day was done.....

5440

Thursday, May 1st, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice being able to resume your letter, one third of which was read yesterday, one third tonight, and the final third to be anticipated on the morrow.

The radio had plenty to say about doings in Moscow, Paris and Rome, but somehow neither Mutual, N. B. C. nor C. B. S. mentioned the fact that while the great Eurasian capitols were on a frolic, the colored schools in "atchitoches Parish were celebrating their annual field day, and so I was quite in the dark about the business until this morning before mail time when, up to my ears in work, I was set up by secretaries and pseudo-secretaries, all requiring their days wage in advance to get themselves to town for the ball game. Only Y. C. remained on the plantation, and as he was busy planting cotton until first dark, he didn't arrive here until almost time for the bus to head for town and the night festivities, so I set him the task of reading but a single page and then let him fly.

Thursday brought with it an opportunity to get caught up a little on less personal mail, and I ran through 11 pages of Carolyn's manuscript. Frankly, I found it very readable and the arrangement will turned. I hadn't gone far before I recalled an old story of the "adam's: -

"An old woman walked to town on a rainy day a getting her long skirts covered with mud, she cut them off just below the knee, so altering her appearance that on reaching home, not even her own dog recognized her."

The point of this tale is that I ran into myself rather abruptly in the article, and although many of the phrases employed up to that point had been mine, I hadn't had the slightest notion I was going to be the peg on which the article was to hang. But I kept an objective viewpoint and must say the thing jogged along interestingly enough so that I was really curious to read further when circumstances cut me off from further exploration for that sitting. There will have to be minor corrections, but these are usually but a word or a phrase, such as changing "arie herese from a planter of cane and cotton to one of indigo, and so on.

If the balance of the article retains the same degree of interest, I should imagine it ought to sell readily, especially

0442

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when tricked out with an elegant set of pictures. I shall write Carolyn tonight, recommending she make up her mind about taking a crack at pictures before starting out on her European jaunt

I appreciate your impressions, as expressed in your letter regarding the impossibility, --and its disadvantages, -- of depending on Carolyn's plans. They echo my sentiments to a T. Like so many other artists, and for that matter, like lots of ordinary people, the whimsies, being part and parcel of the make-up, one simply has to put up with them, -- if putting up with them seems worth while, --or drop them completely. And I must say that while I am exceedingly annoyed by my inability to do much about them, I think their owner of sufficient worth to merit tons of patience and disappointment.

And may I thank you for giving such a comprehensive picture of how things turn in the 57th Street neighborhood, and in the lands of Simon Bolivar. It goes without saying that the pictures presented of both locales were deeply appreciated and especially because they form such an important backdrop of or for the people moving nearer the front of the stage.

On the home front I was amazed this morning to learn Alfred Llorenza, Jr., had died of a heart attack during the night. He, his wife and three or four children occupied a new home next to their or his father, on the north line of Arenbourg. Alfred, Jr., was a sturdy, muscular man of 40, and had never known a sick day in his life. Alfred, senior, and his family, all stricken with typhoid, were Dr. Knipmeyer's first "achitoches" arish patients when Dr. K. came here on October 17th, 1922.. At that time, Alfred, senior, lost 3 children and his wife died a little later. He is a fine man and I feel his years have held more than his share of personal losses.

I intended saying before now that I used another machine in making the envelope for the memo that went forward to you today. I had run out of envelopes and on reaching the post office found the mail man there, and so I grabbed J. A.'s typewriter and knocked off the address. I mention it merely that you may be assured the difference in type was due to me, and not another, and I shall always mention such occasions, if any.

In today's parcel post goes forth a little package for your week end of next week. Two items are wrapped in blue paper, inside the box, plus a paper bag, containing a couple little eatables. I tossed in anything by way of catalogues, magazines or newspapers to keep the stuff from jiggling around, so everything may be discarded on receipt, and you will have all

P.C. from Vichalkley
5442 Lake Charles
Caroline Dorman
P/30

Friday, May 2nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to have the final third of your letter for today.

And thanks for telling me about the Spring dresses the trees are be-decking themselves in. I try to keep abreast with your weather through an early morning radio report, but somehow the Weather Bureau never says anything about the progress of the leaves, lilacs and the like.

We used to have a few lilac bushes here, but lilacs were made for sturdier climes and by the time they get themselves adjusted to the intense heat of Louisiana summers, they somehow appear to loose all their Northern resistance to cold with the result that a cold snap like that of 1951 finished them off, but completely.

The final signature making the advent of Spring authentic in this area is the leafing out of the pecane trees. During the past week, this annual miracle has been accomplished. I so seldom get to the pecane groves or beyond the gardens that this manifestation isn't so striking as it would be, I suppose, were I to be more in the open spaces. But you will recall there are three trees immediately behind the bamboo hedge at the back of the white garden, and the one in the middle forms a perfect dark backdrop for the great sundial. It is through that contrast of light and shade that impresses me most as the season advances, and at this writing the setting is finished and complete for the next six months.

I am at once regretful and tickled that the postman held back the 1st class mail today. On the good side, it gave me an opportunity to run through a lot of stuff I had been holding aside as of no reason for rushing. But on the other hand, one day's skip usually means a double load on the next go-round, but-as it will come on Saturday, I may find it easier to wade through the stuff over the week end than in the middle.

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I am sorry to learn that Mrs. Coombs' territory for the Parish has been changed so that her new province will henceforth cover not the Southern river bottoms but the hilly Northwestern section, where Welfare workers up to now have never explored the native habitat of their clients except in company with a Sheriff or a Sheriff's deputy. It's a hilly-billy section, which is bad enough as a starter, but the mental development of the inhabitants is such that many of them really should not be running about loose but rather should be residing as guests of the State in the asylum. But I'm quite sure Mrs. Coombs will not bother with armed guards in making her rounds. For many people, such ventures would be distinctly on the hazardous side, but in quite an opposite way, Mrs. Coombs is probably as immune to such dangers as was little Miss Alberta in her quaint tours across Europe in unheard of Portuguese villages and lost nooks in the Basque contry or the Flemish lowlands.

I shall be holding my breath in hopes my reading machine doesn't go out of whack, but if I don't use it more than I have during the past week, it won't matter much if it does or doesn't. Besides, something tells me that if it does go on the rocks, I shall be able to get the same kind of service as before, although we may have to stretch a territorial point or two in order to effect the restoration.

For a day, the enclosed card remained a mystery as to the identity of the sender. It seems curious not to have put down initials if not a signature. I gather it may be from Mrs. Chalkley of Lake Charles, as the Chalkleys are the only people I can think of who might go to New Orleans and Yosemite all in the same week. And I do remember having mentioned that I was casting about for a sugar pot, thinking that residents of South Louisiana might stumble over one more readily than one would be likely to "way up North there in the Red River country". J. A. says Mr. Chalkley is a rich man, and if J. A. says that about anyone, I am quite sure the person must be fabulously heeled.

Dr. and Mrs. Foster of Alexandria, La., came by this morning with some Tennessee residents. One of the ladies for years had told her associates about magnolia forscati, and she nearly jumped for joy when, on asking to confirm her contention that there was such a thing, I led her and her "doubting thomases" to four in a row that were in full flower. So runs out the day, and the promise of showers for the week-end is sweet to my ears. May yours be a quiet restful one, too.

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Sunday, May 4th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter in Saturday's post, and how good of you to send along the nice collection of notices regarding little Miss Alberta. I shall be so glad to make use of them.

I liked your impression of Helen's second article on the Gulf cruise. I am under the impression she probably counted off about so many columns to be covered by that jaunt, and it happened that the second one, contrived perhaps as a filler between more interesting ones, was less fulsome in material than some of the others, but called for creation regardless of the scantiness of the material in order to achieve the requisite number of separate items covering the trip.

It was so well said, what you wrote regarding little Miss Alberta's physical departure but he lingering on of her artistry in the canvases that will continue to gladden the eye of so many people down the years. I wish people in the old days had established the habit of pasting such notices on the backs of their canvases, for it most certainly would have served to enlighten other owners down through the years. And as I say that, I am reminded I have intended pasting the Picayune article on the back of The Black Swan, and must make it a point to do so this very week.

The week end has been cloudless, with the morning's pleasantly cool, the days hot, and the nights just right.

On Saturday morning I went to St. Augustin's Church for the funeral services of Alfred Lorenz, Jr. Celeste and Madam Regard went with me. The Church was more than filled to capacity so far as pews went and there was a concourse of people standing. The last funeral I had attended there was Zaline's and although Joe Rocque continues to hobble around much as usual, I fear there is a likelihood that he, too, will be filling the Church again with another vast gathering of people before long. I don't know if there were any other white people at the Lorenz services besides us three, although J. A. may have been among those standing, although I don't know if he went or not. I suppose there were perhaps 700 or 800 people present, as large a gathering of mulattoes in a single building as one is likely to encounter anywhere in the world. One or two of my negro friends had expressed the desire to attend, but they must have decided against it at the last minute.

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Back at Yucca a little after 10, I found a secretary waiting for me, and as he ploughed through the post, I donned plantation garb and so was ready to be up and at the pilgrims who arrived before 11.

There were two or three Henrys for dinner, and as I walked out of the front door with Frances Henry, she remarked that a car had just rolled up to the side gate. It turned out to be Essae Mae Culver and Alice Farrell, a young-ish girl of the Roane type, slated to succeed Essae Mae as State Librarian when Essae Mae retires. They came and sat for a couple of hours with me at Yucca before heading out on business in Shreveport.

I was impressed by the information one picks up unexpectedly from random sources. Essae Mae was recalling the time last year when she and Lois Lester missed me when driving up to Briarwood to spend the day. She assumed I hadn't been to Briarwood and mentioned what a nice cabin and comfortable furniture "that lady from South Carolina had provided for them". Essae Mae, assuming further, I suppose, that I probably did not know Mrs. Storm, went on to say that as for herself, she would always be vastly indebted to her, inasmuch as it was while Mrs. Storm was living in Louisiana that, as a power in civic groups, she formulated and put through the Legislature the legal and legislative framework that brought into being the Louisiana Library Commission, subsequently incorporated as a State agency as The Louisiana Library. It was during the formation of the Commission, I believe, that Essae Mae was selected to be its first President. I naturally said nothing but made a mental note of a paragraph I might include in my next message to Moncks Corner.

Essae Mae said Lois Lester is doing alright and at pilgrimage time she had opened "averly to the public for two days, receiving 450 people the first day, and about 600 the second. That's taking them in large doses, I should say, but perhaps the idea of getting them all jammed through in a couple of days isn't bad.

I managed to get through the last half of Carolyn's article and found it not so entertaining as the earlier part. I reckon she lifted much from Daisey in the Dell's second part of her article, perhaps with a view to rounding out the projected work for benefit of the agent, with a view to doing more work on it later. It will require quite a lot, but I think I can shape it up in several places easily. The great difficulty in writing the Melrose story is making its original and ultimate mistresses of distinction balance nicely. I shudder at the thought but perhaps this will ultimately be achieved by projecting the peg of my personality through the latter section, as she did in the first, thus avoiding the seeming break in continuity. The weather is hot and grand. May it be the same by you.....

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Mr. Storm app. 7/1/52

re: History plate

Monday, May 5th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Full summer with growing supplies of orioles and red bugs, much dust, more cotton planting and the thermometer in the upper 90's.

Pat came in for dinner from Barksdale and left immediately afterward for a ten weeks course in Washington, D. C., before heading out for service abroad, probably England. He asked me to be sure to remind him to take Carolyn's address with him but he flew off without it, and as he is an acute sufferer from writer's cramp, I reckon he will do his exploration of the Motomac without the aid and comfort of little Miss Ramsey.

I am enclosing a couple of clippings from the Sunday, May 4th, Picayune, although my guess is that the date is not attached. Either is important, but I thought you would be interested in the forthcoming Linsey show.

Although ten days behind in opening a number of letters I hope are of second or third rate interest, I have no more sense than to go right on sending out my usual batch, and while a number of these, such as to Charles Mazurette, don't begot answers, still the average will be sufficiently high to keep me snowed under with the n in-coming post, I reckon.

I was busy at the Underwood last evening when Celeste tapped and on entering, said she had come to drag me across the fence for a dab of supper. And just as the screen door closed, Dr. Rand tapped, and joined us for a little snort of 4 Roses, for him, and a spot of wine for me. Celest, having just consumed a few pags of beer, declined either the whiskey or port. But since Celeste was here, the doctor, who already had millions of people at the camp, naturally didn't say anything about supper 'neath the cedars, and so, after he had gone and I had dined next door, I returned through the Gardener's Garter Garden, - so snowy against the darker green under the full moon, and resumed my letter writing.

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It occurred to me in the midst of my Memo to you that I had better write three different slants on a single subject to Mrs. Holoman, Daisy in the Dell and to Helen

To Mrs. Holoman, I outlined two articles with different emphasis, --one for the Times Picayune Magazine and the other for the Special Features section of the Shreveport Times. To Daisy Dell I did five pages that ought to embrace pretty much everything she would need for stirring up an article for the Morning News of Dallas, --whatever section of that paper her Melrose article appeared in. And then, for Helen, I did one of equal length for her Waco Times-Herald column.

The burden of each was a news item, detailing the inception of the idea and its progression in portraying the historic Cane River section of Louisiana in porcelain. To each I hastened to say that illustrations could be supplied, --perhaps a pair of plates, --the Cane River Country and the Melrose Plantation ones, or, if the plates did not lend themselves readily to newspaper reproduction, a likeness of the map of the Cane River Country might be employed.

The human interest for Helen's column could stress the difficulties to be surmounted in making the original sketch on huge stretches of wrapping paper to which a very soft pencil is applied. The eventual reduction of the over-sized rough sketch and the bringing of it into focus and final finish by Tina McInness (the Texas angle thus creeping in), with a wind up of the nostalgic touch in the sketch of the wild game in the Kisatchie National Forest for the big game hunters of Texas, plus the figure of a fisherman on the banks of Cane River, as a reminder to other Texan Isaac Walton devotees from Waco, Houston, Austin, Dallas, etc., who know their Cane River fishing so well. Then followed an account of what the Melrose Plantation plate represented in historic and cultural fields, after which a third plate was described, embracing the salient features of the major scenes in "Children of Strangers". Another depicting ante bellum monuments in Natchitoches, etc., etc.

In each article it was suggested that a line should stress the unique medium of catching a panorama of a segment of the country in porcelain and that collectors, fortunate enough to secure items from the series would be especially avid for the earlier ones which, as of the present writing, have not been released for public sale. If one or four of these articles, --especially the Holoman one, were to be released about the time the Cane River Country plate rolls on to the public market, the publicity ought to be advantageous, don't you believe. Ho, hum, --so much to talk about and so pleasant chatting with you!

5448

Tuesday, May 6th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Thursday letter in today's post.

And although I have read it, it swells the total to three items, --two in 2nd class post, that with vast will power, I consigned to the armoire. That old adage about the Devil finding work for idle hands may be true enough, but why hasn't somebody stirred up something about the Angel who is put off by hands too busily engaged in mundane matters.

Once before dinner, twice afterward, I had so far succumbed to temptation as to start jiving with the knot when outside agencies came to the rescue of my tottering determination by calling me away from said armoire. And just before sitting down to have a little chat with you tonight, I weakened again, when Lo! one of the gardeners, whisked temporarily into the cotton patch, tapped at my door to unroll his problems to me. I let him "talk them out", gave him a glass of wine and sent him across the moon drenched white garden, through the dark green wall of the bamboo and so home to a peaceful rest, I hope.

Frankly I know the flat package must contain a disk, and if I were to weaken at this late hour, rig up my reading machine on the back gallery and so sample its contents, I would devote the balance of my waking hours to sheer mental telepathy and this little Memo would never get itself down on paper and along about Monday the postman would seem to be failing you, whereas in reality, the fault would be entirely mine.

Your note was so nice and it was so thoughtful of you to send along the data concerning little Miss A.'s burial, of which I had heard nothing

In response to your inquiry regarding the circumstances of her passing, I have heard nothing as yet. But sooner or later news will be seeping through, and you may be sure I shall pass it along promptly.

And thanks much for telling me of the news from the Rhine,

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reaching your true hand "the last of March", which I take may have been in the nature of a birthday letter. It is so good to know that the health of your friend is improved, and altogether heartening that the family, --or what is left of it, of the other one time weco associate is moving along so satisfactorily. "hat a nightmare those April and May days of 1945 must have been for the residents of Berlin, and the wonder is that so many of them survived. When one considers the individual experiences in such a time, one can't help being struck by the number of miracles that sometimes transpire in such a concentrated gathering of humanity.

And may I thank you for sending along the Lafayette clipping. How Judge Wilson would have loved to have yanked out the old "marquis's" apron during the festivities of the other presentation ceremonies, and as Supreme Kleagle or whatever his fine title is, I have no doubt he will be among those present at the doings.

Among my other visitors today was Mrs. Woods of Natchitoches. She is one of the pillars of the Episcopal Church and told me that organization is sending out a call for a new preacher from Oklahoma. In response to my inquiry regarding the Reverend David Coughlin, she explained that he has accepted a call to Hawaii and leaves with his family on June 1st. I gather from this that he may now consider himself as starting out on the first leg of his journey whose ultimate goal is New Zealand, and as Mrs. Woods spoke further about the Hawaiian hejira, I smiled to myself, thinking how amazed she would be if she had ever heard of what he had to say a year ago when he honored me with his confidence. He telephoned me the other day, asking if he might come out that afternoon, but as I had already agreed to do a round with the Baptist "apartment", I suggested he just take a "shot in the dark" at some other date, should one occur prior to the end of the current month.

The enclosed card somehow brought back memories of all the doings at Morning Glass when preparations were being made for pouring the "big eye". It occurs to me that post cards may constitute unmanageable particulars in the address section, and I need scarcely remark that as I have no intention of preserving them on my own hook, you, too, will always feel perfectly free in exercising your own judgement regarding their destruction, along with any other data coming to hand, should their retention seem inadvisable. It seems rather odd to me that in spite of the correspondence going on between me and the Bluff "lantation lady, I still haven't the vaguest notion as to what her own first name might be.....

5450

Wednesday, May 7th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Your lovely card dances merrily here before me. I have read it a thrice, and need read it no more, for now I know it by heart, and as its message harmonizes perfectly with its delicious decors, scattered across its pages, the words and the flowers somehow fuse into one, and the whole message, written and painted somehow reflects a segment of little Miss Lee, and the mileage between Manhattan and Melrose never seemed to contract so much.

And I might as well confess I was quite unprepared for the elegant assortment of pictures which came into view as I placed the card on my desk. Some of them were familiar, frankly some of them were exhausted from my last supply, while others came as something suddenly remembered after years of complete forgetfulness. A case in point was the likeness of my old friends, Say-rah and Janie. I shall use one or two for enclosures, --thinking perhaps Miss Nellie would like one, for instance, and naturally I shall use one in the scrapbook.

And how especially thoughtful you were to provide me so generously with the envelopes for the same. Except for the standard ones used in correspondence, envelopes are something one doesn't find in the country and I am entranced to be able to make use of these. I seldom have occasion to use one, but it is so wonderful to have them whenever the occasion arises.

Tonight the moon is almost full and the white garden doubly bright with dozens of little old fireflies scurrying to and fro with their little lanterns. Their light never seemed more a bit of precious moonlight, splintered off the big round disk sailing high over head. The thermometer is in the 80's. The electric fan is already whirling away on the gallery and the reading machine is "all set" for a pleasant, leisurely concert, --all "arpsichord, if you please, and I'm salving my conscience for having "jumped" the date for opening the packages by saying that at least I had the will power to restrain myself from striking a single note on said "arpsichord" until I had had a little chat with you, gotten out some mail, and then, after a shower and bedecking myself

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in some loose, comfortable garments, with the Christmas slippers of leather and sheep skin, when, with a glass of wine and a fresh pack of Kools, I shall drape my form in my most comfortable "lolling chair", and with Die Frau nestling along side, I shall start the evening concert, and something tells me the sitting is going to be long and pleasant no end. Guess if my thoughts, to the tinkling of the harpsichords, wont just naturally be traveling from constellation to constellation in a northeasterly direction until slap over Lyme. It is such a lovely birthday, thanks to Lydia and I'm glad I "jumped" it by a couple of days, for tomorrow night will have another and equally ponderous moon, and the fireflies will be just as busy, and the cigarettes and disks will be doing precisely the same business they will be undertaking tonight, within the next hour.

Mrs. Coombs dropped by this afternoon, keeping her promise to bring down the descendant of Grandpere Augustin for a little tour and the opportunity it would afford him to chat with me about his interest in painting. I think this effort on Mrs. Coombs part must have been something of an effort, for yesterday she moved into her new home and what with her Welfare Work going on uninterrupted, I reckon she must have lots to claim her attention, which, under the circumstances, is just as well, perhaps, since she hasn't heard from her son in Korea since February and tomorrow she goes to Shreveport where her daughter undergoes quite a serious operation.

As for the mulatto youth, he is 16, medium height, and of that delicacy of frame one associates both with the artist and the 10 or 20th generation descendants of Grandpere. What a pity the boy had to give up school for the grocery. Obviously he is talented and while the three or four oils he brought were good, they were over-shadowed by the water colors which had a sturdy charm, delicious color and a finesse that was almost 18th century in their feeling. He said they were his own creation and not copies of anything. The charm of a couple of these was such that tears might easily have started spilling at the mere thought of the conk-eyed world in which we live that in spite of all the welfare billions poured out so often on no account scoundrels, here is a talented youth who, in spite of his gifts, will never have an opportunity to develop them, what with the poverty of his family and the necessity of being a bread winner during all those years ahead when a little instruction and encouragement would tip the scales in favor of the means of producing works that would give him no end of satisfaction and probably would delight many a soul both in his time and afterwards. But we discussed a show in the African House, and perhaps through that medium, or some other, some twist of fortune's wheel will make things a little better for his future. But of this and other matter, more anon. Now for a go at the mail, a shower and then to my harpsichord....

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Thursday, May 8th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Such a lovely concert last night. It is nobody's business how much time elapsed between the striking of the first chord and the last one. As for myself, I don't know either, for toward the end, the tinkle of these sparkling 17th and 18th century compositions somehow fused so perfectly with momentary periods of slumber and sleep that the sitting may have lasted no more than an hour or perhaps a couple of centuries. All I am sure of is the fact that the moon's shadow cast much longer traceries across the gallery when I be-stirred myself to fold up the harpsichord for the night and drowsiness contrived to make the singing of the mocking bird in the old crepe myrtle seem like something out of a moon drenched Paradise as Die Frau stretched and arched her back after a long rest and I silently forsook the gallery for my downy couch.

It's so nice having so many birth days all in a row, and, what with tonight's stage all set for another celebration, I anticipate a repetition, and, as though having advance news of the impending program, Die Frau is already perched on the shelf on the far side of the window, here at my right, and within reach of my hand, were it not for the intervening glass. Little Miss Lee and Die Frau, seemingly as one, have contrived to make this birthday among the happier I have known.

The weather remains in the 90's during the day, but the nights are delicious. The absence of rain impelled me to do much watering of the more delicate things both at Arenbourg and Melrose today. Even the planters are praying for a shower, and that is news for usually they are want to declare they can raise cotton without any rain at all.

We have not approached drought proportions by any means but as a precaution against failure of moisture, the plantation is planting cotton between the rows in which seed were placed last week on the assumption that should the first ones not germinate because of the dryness, the in-between rows will, then which ever progresses more favorably will be cultivated and the other ploughed up.

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I have developed a thory, unsupported by any other authority that my own observation, that plants should be given a maximum of liquids when putting out new leaves and buds and that the rest of the time they "mosey along" pretty well under what ever whimsey old Mother Nature dishes out. By that I mean that although there may have been showers during the Spring, it is more important to keep a bountiful water supply constantly within their reach during that season, --more important, in fact, that watering them during the long dry spells of deep summer when there has been no rain at all. As I see it, the plant tends to insulate itself against heat and drought in a kind of mid-summer hibernation and so it is able frequently to make it very nicely with a minimum of water, whereas in the season of new leaves, --usually in the Spring, or the putting out or fomatation of buds, which can happen a y old time, the greatest amount of water possible should be put within their reach. Oddly enough the Chinese magnolias, in anticipation of the follow February, are want to start forming buds along in September, usually a dry month, and therefore I tend to pass by the items then in flower in favor of pumping water to the Chinese magnolias, even though their leaves are about to fall and flowering time is about six months off.

But I seem to have been swinging too long on the Garden Gate or muscling in on the Old Dirt Dauber, and I apologise for this endless diatribe.

Across the fence the refurbished "white house" glistens dazlingly in the noonday sun, and just on it first-coat of paint, Within another week a second coat out to make it positively blinding. I noticed today that a harmony has been planned, too, in transforming the accompanying garage in the same whiteness. I'm sorry I forgot to take a glance at the little chicken coop immediately beyind the garage where turkeys and chickens are incarcerated prior to decapitation, but I assume this is headed for an equally resplendent new look for 1952. Somehow I am reminded of an old plantation mistress who used to say:

"Nobody knows how much I envy ladies who, when depressed, can wash away all dejection simply by chasing around to the nearest shop and selecting a new hat. If only a new hat would thus eradicate all my disapointments and fill me with the delights and satisfactions that seem to radiate from those thus easily satisfied. I reckon I'd spend the rest of my life flying in and out of hat shops."

But here I am at the end of the page, and withal happy because we could chat and because we have a concert in the offing...

5454

Friday, May 9th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your air mail in this morning's post.

The card sits here before me, dancing merrily along side its companion which preceeded it earlier in the week, and both are dancing jauntily to the tap of old Dr. Underwood, not only because of the vibration he sets up but also, I like to think, because you have done everything to make my day so happy.

As for your birthday letter, it was right in line with the day, endless sunshine and deliciously refreshing as zepthers from the Gulf set all the gay, tender leaves to dancing on their branches in perfect unison with the gaiety in my heart! I am particularly touched by your quotation from Susie Wailes' letter of some time back. At the time I read the Wailes message on its receipt, and re-reading it today in your letter brought forth the deep conviction that it actually should have been addressed not to me but to a certain address in Lyme where the galaxy is of stars radiate with an intensity that puts those, if any, in other diadems slap in the shade. And so I have the pleasure of feeding back through the post the same identical message, since I can honestly say and from the bottom of my heart that only at Lyme is it so richly deserved.

It is good to know you heard the re-broadcast of the Presidential tour of the "White House." I'm sorry I missed it all around. I had thought some of the major magazines would do a "White House number in color,-- I'll bet illustration would have done as much, at the time of the official opening, but perhaps color printing takes longer than black and white and such pictorial articles will be forth-coming in subsequent numbers of perhaps at the holiday season.

It is interesting that in today's letter you should have inquired as to the name of the style of the plate used in the "Melrose Plantation number." It has a name but I don't know it, but shall make inquiry a little ater.

In the mean time, I shall point out the reason why it was

5455

a pleasant coincidence that you should have mentioned the plate, since the only other item in the morning post was the finished sketch from Mina, which I have glanced over hurriedly and put in the mail so it will go forward in the same post with this letter and, since it is insured, will probably arrive a day or so after this memo reaches your true hand.

I shall write a letter to Edwards China which I shall enclose herewith so that you may post it from Manhattan on the day the print goes forward to Mrs. Cowperthwaite. I don't seem to have any labels to hand at the moment and so I shall impose upon you further by asking you to make one out, addressed in the same manner as the envelope. I shall enclose.

I think you will agree with me that Mina did a superb job. I think her treatment of the Kisatchie Forest is just right in that its absence of strong shading throws the emphasis on the center of the composition which of course should be the center of interest. You will note from the enclosed letter and accompanying note attached to it, --both intended for Edwards China, that I have requested a correction for the Yucca caption, and have suggested the possibility of eliminating the words, "Little River", to further heighten the focal point on the words Cane River. Actually "Little River" merits no such prominence, and if any river were to be noted with letters outside the main stream, it should bear the name of Red River. But that is of no consequence, and I reckon the words, "Little River" will be omitted from the plate sketch anyway.

In my original layout to Mina, I gave emphasis to the presence of people of color at the beginning and end of the Cane River course, --"Uncle Jack tipping his hat in Natchitoches and Uncle Tom at the far end of the stream. I hope the final firing of the plate will bring out with clarity the intention that these two figures represent people of color.

In a subsequent memo I shall give a few sidlights to the various places selected for incorporation in a Cane River Country plate. There will be a squawk from some people because their plantations didn't get mentioned and equally strange noises from others because they drew merely a tree and not a house. But I am satisfied, on looking the finished thing over, that I have given emphasis to what seemed important to me, and if the Frudhommes, Cloutiers or Artzogs want to stir up another more in line with their estimate of values, that, naturally, will be their privilege.

It's so kind of you to offer with such open heartedness to handle all this business for me. Your giving of yourself in so many ways has made my day so happy.....

Ruth Hopkins 5/2
5456

Sunday, May 11th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I always thought one particular type of chocolate cake, sprinkled through with pecanes or walnuts was good. It seemed to me Schraft made such cakes better than anyone else in the food business. I don't mind saying I think little Miss Lee makes them best. I still think the good, the better and the best are delicious but the superlative out of Lyme backs everything else off the boards.

The gay tin box, so beautifully wrapped, came through safely in Saturday's post. Will power partly, but mostly a busy day impelled me to reserve opening it until first dark when I could be quite alone and return to my unfinished celebration which has been mine for so many days back, thanks to just one person. I hadn't guessed the contents, for in spite of the hint in your letter, it never occurred to me you would still have any pecanes left. And so, what with a fine musicale all rigged up for the evening, some loose clothing draped about my person, and said person itself relaxed in an easy chair, and, brother, did I go to town, as it were. I have tried rationing them to make them stretch as far as possible, but I have broken that schedule already. Frankly, I should like to let Celeste and Adam Regard sample my birthday cake, but at the same time, the temptation is pretty much of a strain, and if they don't hurry up and stay home a bit, --tonight they are at some religious frolic in town, -- they are going to get left completely. But what will slenderize their figure through lack of participation in this latest example of your artistry will but tend to fatten mine, and it is going to require excessive nobility on my part to stave off a bulge. Just occurs to me that this letter may reach your true hand about the time the sketch for the Cane River Country plate becomes available, and so I shall mention one or two things as they come to mind. What would be your idea as to the most suitable or more suitable medium for newspaper illustration, -- the original sketch or the plate, should the New Orleans, Waco and Dallas papers be interested in carrying same with an article by Mesdames Holoman, Baldwin and Garber. I am under the impression the design, when incorporated with the plate, might be indistinct, in view of its compression, and that the pictorial map as photographed on paper, and not included with the plate and accompanying border, might give greater clarity when reproduced in newsprint. Would that be your impression. I figure if Helen wants to do an article and wants to use one plate, she can readily photograph her own. For Daisy in the Dell and la Holoman, they can make use of the map itself without the plate, don't you think.

re: plate
and
articles

5457

If the New Orleans, Shreveport, Waco or Dallas papers bring forth a suitable article, I shall request permission for reprinting and shall present the same, along with a plate, to the Editors of the two Natchitoches papers. I shall contrive those presentations to take place on the same day I shall make a presentation of a plate to the Civic Center in town, so that the reporting of that event may appear as a news item to further induce reference to the item in the local papers. It goes without saying, of course, that this will be done only after local emporiums have been made acquainted with the product. Would this seem like a good method to secure free advertising, or do you envision some different approach. Do, please, say so, if you have something else in mind.

Going directly to the sketch, I might say that the only original bit of information it contains is the name of the Robert McAlpin plantation. No one, in what writing has been done on the subject, ever chanced upon "Hidden Hill", which I found in the American State Papers by chance. Historians and literati, writing of "Uncle Tom" seem to have concentrated on the ante bellum angle, and apparently none ever explored the State Papers on that subject. The Federal Government confirmed "Hidden Hill" plantation to Robert McAlpin, describing its precise location, etc., but it would seem that historians never associated "r. McAlpin with the literary figure of "Uncle Tom", and the literary critics, gummed up with literature, never explored the State papers. Originally I had in mind to use the circular iron staircase at Natchitoches to denote that town's situation, but I substituted "Uncle Jack", tipping his hat instead, thinking "Uncle Jack" to begin with and "Uncle Tom" to end with would put the thing nicely into balance, especially in the color element. I might say in passing, if I haven't mentioned it before, that the Natchitoches statue of "the Good Darkie" was erected in the present century from or with funds set aside by Mr. Jack Bryant, a prominent white man of Natchitoches, well known to lots of people, like Miss Kate, etc. Through what is said to be the coinage of a resident of the region, -- a late comer who first saw the statue in 1938, and subsequently in 1939 and successive years, the statue which up until then had been referred to simply as "that statue" or "that likeness of the nigger" suddenly was dubbed "Uncle Jack", -- the name being obviously inspired by the donor and not by the individual the statue represented, and during the last half dozen years, the name gained such popular currency, that now it is "Uncle Jack" to every one.

Irma Somperyac Willard, en route from New Orleans to Natchitoches for the week end, dropped in to see me Saturday afternoon, bearing a mighty fine bottle of Dubonnet port. She told me two things of interest, first, that she had seen little Miss A. a couple of days before her death and she seemed fine, and second, that years ago among her mother's papers, she had found a note saying Miss Cammie had, as a college girl, been in love with Irma's papa, prior to his marriage, and that she had mentioned this fact to the "adam who had dismissed with with a flush of face and wave of the hand. But this sheet runs out, but the brownies, cigarettes, records and all remain, and now I continue my festivities.....

5458

Monday, May 12th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The marvelous weather continues and yet, by some strange twist of Fate, the pilgrimage business has fallen off wonderfully and I am able to get a heap of things done without dropping a hoe or a typewriter every five minutes.

Of course the fact that pilgrims are less numerous doesn't mean they no longer exist, but they are appearing in lesser numbers which is all to the good.

This afternoon the Reverend Pompey M. Gillie came to see me, bringing his wife, sister and daughter-in-law. The mission was two fold, first, they wanted a tour, which they got, and secondly, the Reverend wanted me to advise Dr. Rand that not this coming Sunday but the last one in the month would be perfect for pictures at St. Augustine's Church on Little River. I didn't see the Rands yesterday since they didn't come to their camp, but it looks as though I might be seeing them on the last Sunday in the month.

This morning I saw the ladies next door and they were entranced with the couple of pieces of birthday cake I left for them yesterday evening along about an hour after dark, while they were still in town. They found it on their return and with a glass of milk, had it for dinner or supper, and loved it. But not half so much as I. I might as well confess my selfishness by admitting that that gesture is the only one I can make so far as my birthday cake is concerned, for sheer selfishness impells me to keep all the rest for myself. My little tin chest of them is resting in the next room, and about an hour hence I shall be taking it under my arm, along with a pitcher of cold milk, and be-taking myself to the gallery for a little musicale and snack before calling it a day.

And speaking of the ladies next door, it is interesting to record that they forgot my natal day until it had passed and so decided it would be nice to have a joint celebration with Madam Regard for a Mother-Day-Birthday business. On Sunday morning Aurellia came bearing gifts from the ladies and an invitation to dine with them at noon, and dine we did, and it was pleasant, but the cake turned out to be a cherry pie, which was elegant, and I was

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but completely delighted because I already had a better birthday cake from Lyme at home and better than anything anybody else could have contrived.

Enclosed herewith or under separate cover I shall send a letter from Ruth Hopkins who was here last summer one Sunday evening with Carolyn. I think she writes well and I feel sure you will find her account of life in "Washington, especially the doings at the Indian Embassy quite entertaining.

A package from Dora in today's post brought an astonishing assortment of wearing apparel both for me and for my friends. The new shirts and sweat shirts are intended for me, I reckon, while the suits, trousers, belts and the like are for others. As Dora is taller than I, I usually have to cast about with some diligence to find someone with a figure to manage the suits. This time, however, I don't have to do much casting about, for Lee, one of the new secretaries, is, at the mature age of 14, much over 6 feet, and so he will be able to slide into the new finery with ease, I think. I can't help wondering what height he will eventually attain, once he has acquired maturity.

The feelers, put out in every direction, for locating an iron sugar pot, seem to be bearing fruit. Although every plan ation in this region probably had them during the ante bellum period, none are to be found any more except in South Louisiana, what with the various scrap drives for iron during the two last World Wars and the general tendency of local sugar cane planters to use tin containers for boiling the sugar, as opposed to the heroic big old iron ones. One of my Little River negro friends, passing this way this morning to ask me to knock off a letter for him, returned ten minutes after leaving, to report that he just remembered there was a big old pot on one of the Balthazar plantations lying between Zaline's and Madame Aubin-Roque's. Isn't it odd how wide the net has been cast, and yet how close to home one may be located. And so on the morrow, circumstances permitting, I shall contact some member of the Balthazar family and see what can be done about it. I understand it has been lying upside down hard by the old plantation cistern for years, but probably at the moment I manifest interest in the thing, it will automatically become invaluable to its owner and something not to be done without. Well, we shall see.

Alton Johnson came to see me this afternoon. He brought some little crosses he had made for the Chapel and to discuss one or two carving projects he had been turning over in his mind. He is possessed of charm and that rarest of gifts, a genuine desire to please I hope he goes far in his carving. But now for a hot bath, my tin box and the back gallery and mental telepathy going a mile a minute.....

Robina 7/10

5460

Tuesday, May 13th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your elegant letter of Saturday in today's post. I so often complain about slow deliveries that I had better give credit where credit is due, and remark that in the May 10th letter, the usual dawdling along the route didn't occur.

A flock of circumstances shredded my time pretty much today, but I was able to digest the first page of your letter with leisurely enjoyment. I had to kangaroo through the 2nd and 3rd pages, but have them tucked away in the armoire and so am guaranteed the pleasure of having another chat with you on the morrow.

I am glad you had an opportunity to make some in-roads on the package that reached you toward the middle of the week. And may I thank you for giving me the details regarding certain particulars mentioned in the May 1st text. I want to explore it rather thoroughly eventually, and it occurs to me that with my present "A..m..dat bees am, ain't it" secretariat, I might just as well have a go at French texts as English, since one and the other are equally Greek to my reader apparently.

A slight interruption of 2 hours intervenes between this paragraph and the foregoing. I haven't put a yellow, non-insect bulb in my desk lamp as yet this season and so I keep the door on the gallery closed while doing desk work. I opened the door to find none other than King Solomon, grinning from ear to ear, and smiling out a greeting of "Surprise". He had just arrived from Maryland, having driven down in his new Buick and we had much ground to cover to get caught up on news of the past six months. He couldn't believe I hadn't been down the road to see the new house of the overseer, built on the former foundations of the one destroyed by fire, and invited me to take a ride with him on the morrow at which time, as he explained, he would point out the new features of Melrose to me.

But while I haven't been down the road, it is a fact nevertheless that I have been up the road, and only this morning. When I passed by Celeste's this morning, I asked her if she would care to drive me up to the Balthazar plantation, and she was entranced at the prospect. And so I telephoned May Balthazar to see if she might be at home, --it so wonderful all the mulattoes having telephones, and she was.

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May is perhaps 45 or 50 and owns a section of the former rather extensive Balthazar estate. Her house is about 1914 or 1920, rather pleasant, painfully immaculate, some Grand Rapids furniture and some marvelous ante bellum pieces. May had infantile paralysis as a child and limps a little. A gentleman of color married her a few years ago for her money. He got her jewels and some bonds but she still has the place, plants 20 or 30 acres of cotton and raise 50 or 100 turkeys, some fine chickens and so on. I took her a Melrose plate, both because I wanted to use it as a wedge for lifting a pot and also because I wanted her to have one, knowing she would like it on several counts. She was entranced, and told me I could have either or both of her two iron pots, but I declined as one wasn't as big as St. Giggin's and the other was identical with one I have in the African House, and I saw no point in simply collecting pots for pots sake. But May seemed determined I shouldn't go home empty handed, and aside from giving Celeste and me some canned fruit, which I handed over to Adam Regard on our return, but asked me if I would be interested in a machine to grind corn. She took me into her basse-cour and there stood a splendid example of the ante bellum meal grinder. She said if I would consider it, she would so much like me to have it. I shall pick it up one day this week when a truck and a half dozen stalwart arms are available. It is square, the frame made of large uprights of wood, each upright being perhaps 5 inches square, and it is perhaps 3 or 4 feet from one upright to the other, or 4 feet square. The thing stands about 5 feet in height. At the top is an oblong of wood, perhaps 18 by 24 inches into which the corn is poured, and from it, trickles down to the stone just beneath, the stone being horizontal, in the same position as the base of St. Giggin's fountain. And marvelous to relate, although exposed to the weather this past hundred years and more, the thing still works, and May herself demonstrated how she herself sometimes ground (growned) corn into meal. It is the only ante bellum mill of its type I have ever seen and I think it will add another note of interest to our museum collection. It is too vast to get inside the African House, but I shall put it under the plantation bell on the East side of the House and the projecting roof will give it adequate protection, --something it has never known. And if the Wenk brants don't smash it up before the summer is done, I shall be thankful.

May served an excellent creole coffee, and with true regard for mulatto amenities, declined to partake of any herself while Celeste and I sipped ours. And so, he went for a pot and brought home a mill, which doesn't wind up today's doings but was a good starter.

I love your vignette of crossing Central Park South, with a big moon between the buildings over your shoulder, and the operations of the telepathy department along the way. How grateful to God am I for one little Miss Lee of Lyme.....

Carl Harms
7" 5462

Wednesday, May 14th, 1952.

Memorandum:

From a passing pilgrim, I was able to get a few letters read but of course saved the balance of yours until Y. C. passed this way, and it was grand to explore the second page

before an interruption prevented finishing it completely.

As the other two secretaries had passed this way earlier, I am thus guaranteed the pleasure of a third day's chat with you, although tomorrow's will be a little more brief, since I accomplished nearly the entire message.

It is so good of you to give me a glimpse of the Paris picture you saw behind Berdorf Goodman's. It sounds well worth while, and it goes without saying that I am entranced you had an opportunity to hear Duncan Elliott's voice. I have no idea if his voice appears about the same on tape recordings as on records, --sometimes, I understand, there is quite a difference, -- but perhaps it was sufficiently true, the one to the other, that you might easily imagine how pleased I was with his recorded voice, and how its excellence suggested Alexander Scourby's, although delivery and tonal impressions are more parallel than identical.

I echo your opinion completely regarding the pleasure it

would have been to have been sitting along side when the first dip into the Postell volume was undertaken, and it is pleasant to know he mentioned the "adam" as a source for his material, and the Jenkins and Braezeale papers. I think Postell is as thorough a student as I know and I am so glad this volume has been brought out in book form, for that implies the University will be giving him a other degree shortly, and that pre-supposes an increase in salary, and since he never followed the Madam's recommendation about disposing of his six offspring in order to make his research easier, I reckon he will be able to use any extra money coming his way.

The reason I had to break off before finishing your

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letter was because a servant came dashing in to say that a truck and seven men were awaiting me to make the raid on the Balthazar plantation. It just occurs to me that this particular place was formerly referred to under the greater tract, known as Reform Plantation, --as section of old Francois Robiaux's holdings, and I think I shall ask its present owner to register a name for her present acreage. I think she will not guess the implication and I shall not reveal it to her, and I feel quite certain she will be even more entranced to accept my recommendation that was Madam Cloutier with the Beaufort business. Naturally, the obvious name of this Balthazar place would be Gaspard Plantation, don't you think, or would you prefer Melchoir, for surely the names of at least another of the three wise men should thus become associated with property belonging to one bearing the name of one of that trio.

Well, anyway, we made the trip alright, although we had some difficulty, in spite of all the brawn present, for the truck was high and the mill heavy. But we made it without incident and on our return, placed it, as indicated yesterday as a probable site, at the East end of the African House. The wood is so worn by the weather that one or two of the up-rights will have to be re-enforced, but that will not be difficult as soon as a field hand-carpenter finds time to lay aside his hoe for a saw and a hammer. All the original gear is intact and in order, and the mill stones in perfect condition, so that if one had a mind to, corn could be ground on it today. I find it a miracle that this ante bellum object, so important in early plantation life, should have thus survived all the hazards of Time and Man, and now that it is not exposed so much to the weather, it ought to be good for a other couple of hundred years after it has been repaired a little in one or two place where it is a little weak.

Although the local business minds try to give the impression such monuments of a departed age are of no consequence, in reality I think there is a secret satisfaction that another treasure has been added to the "elrose collection, and we both know perfectly well that the Madam would have been delighted over its find and preservation.

I must tell you again how much I appreciate that section of my birthday embracing the photographs. In glancing through them again this evening, the one of Grandperes portrait gave me an idea for its subsequent use, in connection with another sketch or two, for a pictorial plate, and although that is something to be considered later, it is so pleasant to realize that your gift brought forth the idea.....

Daisy J.
Madame bases

5464

Thursday, May 15th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your grand letter in this morning's post.

Somehow I had not anticipated one, and as it was penned on Monday, congratulations again seem to be in order for Uncle Sam for having made the rounds so spryly.

It was good to you to pass along the quotation from la Storm's letter which both refreshed my memory on the point it covered and filled me with gratitude to you for having solved that matter which as puzzled me regarding her name.

I'm wondering how much longer she will linger on the Pacific Coast, since a jaunt to Europe is said to be in the cards for this summer, which seems to leave a rather thin filler of sandwich of Time. I can only gsp at her energy and unflagging interest in things at 80. What do you suppose she must have been like half a century earlier. Is it in the answer to that question that explains her widowhood, do you suppose.

And thanks for passing along the glimpse of coming events, as seen from your vantage point. It goes without saying that I shall be interested no end in the final decision. At the same time I am hoping the visitor from the lands of Simon Bolivar doesn't linger too long, especially if his presence means throwing the domestic front into a hurly-burly of activity, from bigger and heavier dinners and more people in to burn the midnight oil.

Today was one of those in which I come to its close dissatisfied because I have accomplished little to how for the enervation. The prolonged dry spell has almost reached drought proportions and I have accordingly been busy soaking a lot of acreage, which, since it requires no expenditure of energy, should make one tired, but somehow I am always sweating away at the job, just standing still, and I never have been able to find out why I find the business so tedious, except, perhaps, that time passes faster if I am more actively fiddling at something other than miles of garden hose.

5465

La Mabry, or whatever her name is, came to see me during the afternoon, ringing a fine bottle of wine which she declined to sample, and which I let go by the boards in favor of a cold coke. She is having some of her Natchitoches Parish property surveyed and spoke with some enthusiasm of a young man, engaged in the lumber business, who has been dickering for some of the trees on her property. She says his name is W. R. Cox, and is familiarly called "Slick" by his friends. I should think that name ought to be enough. She says he is a diamond in the rough, has never been to Melrose, and has asked her if she could eventually bring him by. She says she would like my opinion of him. Frankly, I have no time for polishing diamonds in the rough and less time for hill-billies, as I take it he is, and so I told her my schedule prevented me from receiving any but my intimate friends for the balance of the summer, and I hope she appreciated the brush-off. From Edward's China indicates they are all "set" at their Rock Hill establishment and are all poised to have a go at the Cane River Country item. I suppose this letter reaches me about the time the design comes to your own true hand. It occurs to me it might be a good idea to put a covering of cellophane over the original sketch when the plates are ready and lend the sketch to some emporium dispensing the merchandise, since the pen sketch, surrounded by the finished product, might catch the eye of many a window shopper.

From the enclosure, you will note that Daisey in the Dell declines the idea of doing an Cane River Country article for the Dallas Morning News. I suppose this is due in part to the fact that at the moment she is consumed with other thoughts in preparation for her vacation. When September rolls around, she may give the matter further consideration, since the article itself shouldn't require much labor, as I have already supplied her with four pages, single spaced, representing both a likely framework and substance, except for whatever she might feel might be added by way of human interest. Naturally if I submitted an article about my own creations it would be obvious to the Editor that I was taking a stupid way to beat a drum, and the stuff would be chucked into the trash basket as unpaid-for advertising, which, in reality is what we are hoping to do, although if the thing were present by a special feature writer about a new twist in historical documentation through a ceramic medium, it seems to me it might embrace interesting reading for Dallas readers who know and love to road-run through the Cane River country.

Well, so things turn, and now I must get at the mail, and thence to a bit of harpsichord music and so to bed.....

5466

Friday, May 16th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I reckon Carl Carmer was not the first person in the world to wonder at the reason for some limited geographical spots being intensively productive of one type of thing or another, and surely we have both pondered as to why the Cane River country and Melrose especially seems one of those spots.

And all this is prefaced to a further remark, recalling the unheard of doings in the horticultural department when after 50 years of failure on Miss Cammie's part to sprout a grandiflora magnolia seed under most favorable conditions, one non-chalantly burst into life atop the big old palm in the front garden, hard by the gate.

And in view of such considerations, you may well picture my surprise today when I stumbled over another fine young magnolia grandiflora, perhaps two or three years old, flourishing mightily up in that big old pecane tree, called The Patriarch, in the center of the bulb garden behind the Weaving House.

There is something about this phenomenon reminding me of Ida Mazurette and her broken leg, when everyone was filled with commiseration at the breaking of the first, but everyone went into gales of laughter when, just back from the hospital where the first one was set, she tumbled down stairs and broke the other.

I could scarcely believe it when I discovered the magnolia in the big palm, but on finding this second one, I merely laughed and told myself it was impossible, even though the thing was actually slap in front of me.

On the national front, the political pot continues to seethe but seems to arouse scant interest so far as I am concerned. Last night I listened to W. Averill Harriman, and found in him the most satisfactory radio personality on the upper political level that I have run across in the Democratic camp. Perhaps you heard him when interviewed by Larry Haseur and preceded by F. D. R. Jr., and followed by Senator Lehman. I liked the way Mr. Harriman didn't dodge the questions and

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agreed with what he had to say. I heard Mr. Mullus in a symposium on foreign policy and three criticisms of the Administrations handling of the same. I liked what he had to say, too.

I am a little puzzled that General Eisenhower has received as many votes for Republican delegates as he has. Surely Senator Taft epitomizes the conservative wing of the Republican Party, and since the Republican Party itself is more on the conservative side than the Democratic, I should think that if I were a Republican I would find that the Senator and not the General stood for all the stand-patism with which the Republican Party has so long been tinged. Therefore if I were a Republican, I most certainly would be beating the drum for the Senator, as I believe all the ultra conservatives are. If the Senator can only get himself nominated and can persuade General MacArthur to sound off on their ultra conservative bender, then someone like Mr. Harriman really ought to have a chance, in spite of all the mink coat stuff that is going to weight so heavily in the forth-coming contest.

Inadvertently I threw out a card received today from Kate Perkins, in response to a note I sent her on Sunday, telling her of the impending Cane River Country plate. She responded by asking me to set aside a dozen for her, saying she would send a check whenever desired, and delivery might be made any old time between now and Christmas, ---or after that, if that was too early. Nice pal, Miss Kate.

May Balthazar came to see me this morning, bringing me a couple of quarts of black berries she had picked at dawn. She wanted to buy a plate. She said some man who had taught at St. Athew's School several years back, had lived in her home during his Cane River stay and that once I had invited him to drop by to see me, and that on the appointed night, he had eaten supper, because he looked forward with so much enthusiasm to the conference. I remember the man alright, but I can't recall there was anything special about the reason for the meeting, save that of one neighbor being invited to call on another. Perhaps it was the first time the man of color had been bidden to the home of a white one. Be that as it may, --and I only have May's word for it, the man has continued to write her, following his departure from this Parish to study somewhere in some other college for colored people and he never fails to inquire after my good health and doings at Melrose. It was her point that he, of all people in the world, would love to have a Melrose plate. Well, that was an easy one, and I'll bet he gets one.

Californians on the agenda for tomorrow morning, and so the week end will begin. No hope yours may be ever so peaceful and happy..

5468

Sunday, May 18th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A gentle rain has been falling for the past 20 hours. It must be rather general, since Oklahoma, San Antonio and New Orleans weather broadcast report the same situation.

The planters were all beginning to cry for rain, but at least one of them didn't take long to remark that enough is enough and clear skies would be welcome again, but the prediction for tomorrow is scattered showers. But for our side of the fence, everything is in a receptive mood, and the present excess of water will stand us in good stead when, along in July and August, the Arenbourg children will want to draw on the reserve.

Saturday was pilgrimage weather, however, with much sunshine and spanking breezes from the Gulf. I had too many people, -- California, South Carolina, Maine, Florida, Oklahoma, Georgia, not to mention Louisiana. There were some I never did see, as I learned from Eugene who had sent some from the store while I was busy with others. Today's rain, however, gave me comparative freedom from road runners, but my time has been cluttered up by local callers, -- Ben, Celeste and so on. Dr. Rand came to bring me an elegant supper, with much roast beef, tomato juice jello salade, deviled eggs, pudding and the Lord knows what all. As I had already agreed to sup across the fence, the Rand handout fitted in very nicely with other stomachs passing this way that weren't so amply lined.

It seems to have been a hurly-burly week for the Rands, although I am not sure of all the doings. For one thing, Dr. Rand wrecked his car, but fortunately escaped any injury to himself. Within the hour of the wreck, his sister, living in Alexandria, suffered a stroke and is in the hospital. These two things seemed to be the main peaks in a week of rough contours.

But he wanted to tell me of a surgery case he had stumbled over in an old medical book in Cheneyville, La., which delighted him, and enchanted me. Along in the 1840's, a Cheneyville physician was called to a plantation to attend a slave who had been struck in the stomach with an axe which, among other things, had severed one tube of his intestins. With what seems to me vast imagination, in view of the limited medical aids within reach, the doctor

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called for a tallow candle which he whittled down to a size just a fraction larger than the severed intestine. He then drew the lower part of the intestine over half the candle, and pulled the upper section down over the other part, so that the tubes were joined, lapping over just a little, and, with the candle inside, he had a foundation on which he could sew them together. The heat of the body, after the stomach had been sewed up, tended to soften the shaved down tallow of the candle within the intestine, and when food was administered, the tallow automatically loosened and so was naturally eliminated along with other waste material through the normal channel of the alimentary canal. The slave lived.

Dr. Rand said that on occasion he has used a bead or a bround button for such a purpose with results that have been satisfactory, but he was delighted with the ingenuity of the Cheneyville physician.

I haven't turned out as much mail today as usual, but reckon I shall knock off a few letters before folding up. The unending crackle of static offers no temptation to radio listening and I have nothing of interest for the reading machine at the moment, so I may readily stick to old Dr. Underwood without any impulse to divert my attention in other directions.

It occurs to me that on the sketch of the Cane River country, there are at least two omissions which I shall air mail a memorandum about to Edward's China so they may be inserted forthwith, assuming the photograph of the sketch may reach them this week. One omission calls for two words to be inserted beneath the cabin at the extreme right of the sketch, opposite Magnolia. The words should be "Brick Quarters", for the Magnolia slave cabins are the only one of brick in the Parish, and although well over a hundred years old, are still occupied by negroes on the place. I think there are about 6 or 8 of them, all together, forming a little street.

On the extreme left of the sketch, between Cashmere and Beaufort Plantations, the words Bayou Natchez should be inserted, as this was the site of the encampment of the "atchez Indians when they came over here, after being driven out of the Adams County area by the French in 1729. Incidentally the present little community of Bayou "atchez is dominated by people of wealth, including a State Senator, and it is possible the presence of the "atchez name may have a desirable effect on quickening interest of the said residents in the plate, don't you think so. And so I shall send along these notes to Edward's China, and try to restrain myself from adding anything more, although if the thing weren't so crowded already, I should like to put in the cannon for Colfax, the Natchez Trace, which, incidentally crosses the Cane River country at Bayou Natchez, etc., etc., but it is the salient features which must be included and not an endless conglomeration of unmanageable details.

If only you may have had a measure of the comparative peace I have enjoyed this week end, I shall be so happy for you.....

let print go forward to Edwards immediately and regardless.

5470

Monday, May 19th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your air mail in this morning's post.

It was so good of you to take time out when so pressed for time to give me two pieces of news of equal interest, business and personal.

I'm sorry the sketch got such rough treatment in transit, but it will not effect the final design on the plate, which is the main consideration. As I understand it, the manufacturer must of necessity make a new sketch that will fit in more perfectly to the limited space of the circle in which it will figure. And in that transposition, any imperfection that appears in the print may readily be eliminated. As remarked above, that is the primary concern in this business. Of secondary interest is what if any use the Louisiana and Texas press will make of the prints when, if ever, they are offered for illustrations. I had thought of using the original sketch in connection with some window display or other, but that isn't imperative. But even so, if it should seem desirable, I shall simply tie a cord or ribbon from side to side and from top to bottom, so adjusted as to conceal the cracks, and the presence of some gay streak of color across the prosaic black and white surface of the sketch, may attract the eye of the passer-by the more quickly. I have some pretty blue ribbon which might be used to especial advantage, since there will be plates surrounding the sketch if actually used in a window display, and the blue of the ribbon against the white of the sketch will harmonize pleasantly with the general color scheme of the accompanying plates.

As for the newspapers, if they use the photograph of the sketch for illustration, they can omit the crack when making up the block, but even if they shouldn't, it really doesn't matter, since newspaper illustrations are notoriously of such poor quality that probably nobody would so much as notice the blemish.

Again let me say how deeply I appreciate your kindness in taking time out during such a busy season to acquaint me with full particulars. And my thanks, too, for giving me the probable date on which the prints will be forwarded both to Maryland and to Melrose. I shall follow up today's air mail to Edward's China with another which should easily reach them well in advance of receipt of the print, and at the same time I shall drop Mrs. Holoman a

5471

letter guaranteeing thereby that she will not pass this way next Sunday when Daisey in the Dell is here, for it will be easier to handle the Dallas business and the New Orleans at separate sittings.

I have knocked out an article, suitable for either the Morning News or the Picayune and shall let Daisey in the Dell run through it on Sunday when she is here. If she wants to use it, I shall keep it here until she has completed her vacation, and then forward it with an illustration direct to Dallas. In the mean time, I shall contact Mrs. Holoman and give her a go at the thing to be used as a framework on which she can hang some rigamarole of her own. And a third print will go forward immediately to Helen, in case she wants to use it in connection with her column in the Waco paper, and the fourth I shall give to the Editor of the Natchitoches Times, but not until hearing from Helen, on the assumption that her column might lend itself readily for re-print by the Natchitoches paper. It goes without saying, of course, that the Natchitoches Times will not be given either print or copy until around the 1st of July, at the earliest, --perhaps a little later, just before Christmas advance advertising begins and so crowds out news items, and also it goes without saying that at least the first shipment of plates must be in Louisiana before the publicity is released. Should the Picayune publish it in the Magazine Section, about a month will be required, as the Magazine Sections are actually printed in St. Louis four weeks ahead of release in New Orleans.

I shall keep the fifth print in the scrapbook to have it to hand should some unforeseen request call for the item before one or the other copies have been returned, and eventually, if one does come back, I can send said 5th to Nina as a matter of courtesy.

In view of all the excitement about and around the family hearth during the past week, I marvel that you have the strength or will to bother yourself with all this business on my behalf, but I do appreciate it all. I have been holding the thought all day that following the final Sunday morning of hurly-burly you were able to collapse for the balance of the day and indulge in a large slice of solitude and quiet.

The drizzle continue throughout the night. Perhaps a couple of inches of rain fell during the entire period. Thin gauze like clouds veiled the afternoon sun so that a maximum of moisture is being absorbed by the earth while the gourds and dahlias, planted a while back are up and growing madly.

And once more my thanks for your splendid help in all this picture business. If this letter reaches you before you get the prints, please know the delay in posting them will make no difference. Let convenience guide you, I pray.....

Dora 7/16/52
Robena 7/17
5472

Tuesday, May 20th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter in today's post, for it was quite unexpected.

And may I say thank you a thousand times for the misspelling of Joyous Coast. Like Sister, I could take a prize in my spelling, as only you know too well, and in the somewhat added pictures I make of certain words in my mind, I too often fuse a Joyous with a Joyeuse, or simply make some outlandish combination of letters that is bound to look even more odd in type than in the mental pictures, if any, I may chance to have when writing.

I shall always be indebted to you if you will call these curiosities to my attention for no one else will, and besides, while I must admit I have no qualms about writing anything whose spelling I know not in correspondence with you, I should be distinctly shame-faced if I continued the wrong spelling of words to others who are more or less on the casual side of my acquaintance.

I shall get off a Memorandum, correcting the Joyous Coast spelling, so that Edwards China may have it in ample time to correct.

I was so interested in what you found on the pictorial map of the State and it is interesting that item should have used La Cote Joyeuse spelling instead of the English. I may be wrong, but it seems to me in such a case as the present one, the English spelling to go with the balance of the spelling on the map is on the side of better taste, if not in the best Barnett T. Kane manner of tossing in a "oui" or a "Non" on the slightest provocation. Further it would seem to me that if we used "La Cote Joyeuse" we would be consistent only if we followed through with such a thing as "La Foret Nationale de Kisatchie" and that really ought to entitle anybody to a crowning with a skillette or the item spelled something like that.

It is said that Dan Henry is being married today or to morrow to some girl he has been going with for a few years. He claims he wants a cook. I met her once, and think he got one. I believe he got two children to boot, which ought to fit in neatly with his nature.

5473

Madam Regard speaking of a hurried visit to a foot doctor the other day, spoke of various treatments accorded people who suffer from foot difficulties which she and Celeste and J. A. do but which, as I pause to knock wood, I may say with thanksgiving that I do not. What Madam Regard had to say may or may not be of value to anyone who suffers from corns. It seems, according to her doctor, or the doctor's assistant, or somebody in the office, that one of the best treatments for that difficulty is simple enough, --simply put a drop of water on an asperin tablet, and apply the resulting paste to the corn, and if one is going out, leave the paste on the spot when pulling on one's stockings and that within the day, the thing will be cured. It sounds a little too simple to be true, but I know nothing about what caused the difficulty to begin with and even less as to what asperin is made of and how the thing works chemically, and so I sell it as I bought it, --for nothing, and without guarantee.

I was surprised to learn from Celeste yesterday that we again have alligators in this area. The Natchitoches Parish Sheriff, Earle Morris, and his wife were driving down this way recently, and near the juncture of the Melrose Lane with the cement highway at Montrose, they noticed a big old alligator beside the road, not far from the bridge at that point over Old River, --one time Red River before it moved to Cane River. It seems the only weapon the Sheriff had in his car was a short handled hatchet, --an interesting commentary on local Law enforcement accoutrements, but he couldn't get close enough to the beast to take a lick at him. He did have an iron chain in the car, --another interesting side light on Sheriff accoutrements, --and with it, he tried to lasso said alligator, but had no luck. It kept opening its gigantic mouth and flipping its ponderous tail, but gradually moved backwards, but always facing Mr. Morris. Eventually it backed itself slap over the embankment, and so disappeared beneath the surface of the water which is quite deep at that point, --the place where several soldiers on war games here a number of years ago were drowned.

Today's mail was heavy and I had an opportunity to run through one or two items very sketchily, and so will not forward the letter from Daisy in the Dell, who, fortunately sets June 9th, as a date for a visitation. This will enable me to give her the cut for the newspaper, covering the article on the Cane River Plate, and in the mean time I shall try to get in touch with Mrs. Holowman for a Picayune one. The suggestions in the Shreveport letter are to the point, and I shall take up the Hearn matter at the appropriate time. Again my thanks for the assistance on the Joyous Coast business. Isn't it wonderful how many errors can creep into a matter so limited in possibilities....

Melvin Roberts
5/16/52

5474

Wednesday, May 21st, 1952.

Memorandum:

And speaking of Memoranda, a week ago last Monday, when I heard Anne Harding and Louis Calhern were going to do "The Magnificent Yankee" for Lux Radio the following week, I intended calling your attention to the program, but forgot.

Last Monday night I chanced to glance at the clock just on the hour, and although I had forgotten what was "cooking", I did recall there was something or other I wanted to hear, and so was delighted when, at the sound of her voice, I recognized my favorite actress.

I thought both stars were excellent as "Mr. and Mrs. Justice Holmes". I had seen Calhern but once or twice on the stage, --once in some role in which he played Cesare Borgia, perhaps, or possibly it may have been as Hannibal with Jane Cowell in "The Road to Rome", or perhaps both. He never was a great favorite of mine although he always seemed adequate, but of course little Miss Harding was just as wonderful as ever.

I hope you heard both the play, and especially the final return for the curtain call, in which she explained that originally when called by the movies to do "Mrs. Jones", she had at first declined, being under the impression that "The Magnificent Yankee" was a baseball story, and at the moment she "couldn't quite picture Anne Harding on 3rd base".

Today's weather was pure Spring, with a mighty heavy dew last night that made the Arenbourg-Lucca scene a bit dampish before the sun really got turned on completely. My morning was broken into by three pilgrims, one lady from New Orleans, the other two from Alexandria, bearing a note from Dr. Rand, asking me to extend the amenities. They were lovely people and I didn't mind the interruption, since they apparently found much in their go-round. I was slightly amused at one observation made by two of the ladies. In speaking of the Rands, I inquired has to Ellen Rocket was making it, as I hadn't seen her in some time, and we all agreed she had a wonderful personality, and I observed that it was after the pattern of her father, for she does suggest Ed Rand in many of her ways. But two of the ladies agreed that it was true Ed Rand had a strong personality, but both hastened to say it was to be expected, since it was just

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like his father's. Now actually, while Ed Rand is quite individualistic, with no particular leans in either side as to character, it must be admitted that if he resembles anybody, his personality more closely follows Blythe's pattern than that of his papa. But by a couple of little phrases, I took it that Dr. Rand was the hero in that family for my guests, and so I just let the whole thing pass.

I took time out this afternoon to attend to a few little matters, such as re-arranging things in the vast expanse that is Yucca's attic. I was perfectly delighted to find some fine old stationary and Venetian blinds. I guess they were about six and a half or seven feet in height. The Venetian blinds were about the conventional width, something over a foot or foot and a half, and the stationary section was double that width. I brought down two of the Venetian ones, for end pieces, and one of the stationary one, for a middle piece. They must be of ante bellum workmanship and still bear an ancient green paint. This I proceeded to sandpaper off, not quite finishing the job before night caught up with me. I shall eventually paint the three sections plain white, put hinges on them, and thus will have a pretty ante bellum screen which I need not but which may lend a decorative note on the gallery or perhaps in the living room if the whim impells me in that direction.

I'm still days behind on the mail, save all that is casual, as for example, the enclosure, which I struggled through because it could be put "in all mains". Don't you love the "sweet surrender" part. I had to have that spelled out to me a second time, since I had never dreamed of offering myself in that guise to passing pilgrims. If only the weeds could talk, I reckon they would be ganging up on me in a body to discover how anybody ever tripped over any "sweet surrender" stuff in the hoe-swinging department. Fortunately the kindly gentleman will never hear me sound off on the three youngest members of the family whom he seems to love and I seem to loath, and so in his San Antonio isolation, his peace of mind on that score should remain undisturbed.

I continue wading through "Mr. Lincoln and his Army" by Bruce Catton or Cotton or some such, making about a page a night, so readily does my head start nodding as soon as I begin. Up to the present it has been all Army and Battles and only a vague glimpse of "Uncle Abe", and carrying little for military men and matters, I find the thing, although well contrived, a bit on the tiresome side. But it seems to be about all I have to hand at the moment, and "any port in a storm".

Marie Antoinette is all of a twitter about the prospects of a new sister-in-law, and the more so, probably because she has never seen her and so must turn to me for a word portrait, and knowing the quality of my inimitable sketches, you can well imagine there is much left wanting when I get through.....

Daisy 7/7

5476

Dan's wife & children

Thursday, May 22nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

Somehow it seems logical to begin this note by picking up where we left off in yesterday's Memo.

I think I had ended with some reference to Marie Antoinette. At coffee this morning, I learned of her conference with Paynie and Frances from whom she learned that in taking unto himself a wife, Dan had also automatically begot himself a family, in view of the fact that he has already had two children by said wife. One day when high a couple of years back, - perhaps a year and a half, he had spilled this information and then, later, being sober, and apparently remembering, proceeded through a variety of contemptable means, to make life disagreeable for the person to whom he had confided it in a drunken moment.

It will be interesting to notice the various reactions to this information of marrying a family of his own when, for example, the fine feathered kin folk in Baton Rouge hear about it. It's certainly going to be a field day in Shreveport, of course, and as I have never mentioned my knowledge of the existence of this out-of-wedlock family to a single soul, I shall simply sit back and receive the confidences with wide-eyed amazement.

It seemed to me at the time of her death, the Madam should have been spared another twenty years at least. In view of the humiliation this business would have brought her, it is certainly better she didn't have to live to go through this unexpected twist.

And I must take this opportunity to give Celeste her due, for although she must have been profoundly shocked by the swiftness by which she found herself possessed of a new sister-in-law and a couple of nieces or nephews, all in one jump, still her impulse toward kindness impelled her to pick up her telephone and congratulate Dan and invite him and his bride to come out for dinner or tea whenever convenient for him and his wife.

Because she has been treated so inconsiderately by so many of her in-laws, and yet is never failing in coming up with forgiveness and apparent forgetfulness of their unkindnesses, it sometimes seems to me her attitude toward cruelty in others toward herself is much like little Miss Alberta's attitude toward illness, - a kind of blind determination that it actually doesn't exist, and it's all so wonderful.

5477

In the field of correspondence, at long last, I had an abundant secretariat to lend me a hand and I covered many a typed word, for not only did three secretaries show up but Dr. Knipmeyer ran through some of the longer things with me and Little King came by and said he would love trying his hand at secretarial work during his Cane River interlude from Aberdeen.

I especially invite your attention to the letter from Daisey in the Dell. She seems to have included a couple of autobiographical notes that are interesting. For instance, in saying that to little Miss Alberta, she was probably just "that girl from Hammond" suggests that Hammond was once her home, and I'm wondering why, for Hammond is the heart of the strawberry industry some 75 miles, perhaps, to the Northeast of New Orleans, and the center of hill-billy regions par excellence. You may recall that it was at Hammond that the Huey P. Long newspaper was published in the 1930's. What in the world aside from fiddling with strawberries do you reckon the Garbers were doing in that unlikely place.

And this is the first time I remember having heard anything about a couple of aunts kicking about in the backdrop. Since they are all planning to head for "home" on June 9th, I gather from this that the aunts, too, live in Dallas, and I am wondering if it will eventually turn out that Daisey in the Dell lives with her mother and these two ladies, - which, if true, - suggests a houseful of females that might explain a lot of things in the personality of Daisey in the Dell herself.

I shall write her saying that the morning of June 9th will be alright, but at the same time, I shall make it clear that I am not inviting the four of them to break bread with me or with Celeste. If she were a smart girl, Daisey in the Dell would park the three ladies in Natchitoches for rest and relaxation and food to break their jaunt from Lake Charles, and so dash in here alone for 2 or 3 hours when we could feed her easily enough and find time for a little concentrate literary endeavor, - a possibility which seems inordinately remote when three ancient bags are milling around in the bushes while Daisey and I try to concentrate on word values and methods of procedure. It's marvelous to me how I can arrange other people's vacations for them with such disregard for their wishes and at the same time find it impossible to contemplate such a thing as putting foot in the big road for myself. But I had better fold up along about now, only pausing to voice my appreciation to you again for all the nice things being done for me regarding the design and all.....

5478

Friday, May 23rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

Now for a little chat in the dark. A storm this afternoon not only toppled the thermometer but must have blown down a tree breaking the high power lines. Thus the radio, reading machine and lights are having a little respite, but old Dr. Underwood jogs along regardless.

The pilgrimage business is picking up and before today's rain, I had plenty of them. I suppose people have always tended to head out in the big road by one route and return by another, and yet it is only of late I have noticed so many of them going "around the circle, as for example, two groups today from the Dallas area who said they had traveled Southeastward through Natchez and across country to Mobile and back along the Gulf Coast and up this side of the Mississippi.

One of the visitors, a Mr. Bonnet, had stopped off to see Weeks yesterday and found him in a talkative mood but obviously a little worse the wear physically. I don't know if he implied an alcoholic element obtained, and didn't inquire. He said Weeks was making up a list of impossible people who couldn't come to the Shadows, and first on the list was one Harnett Lane and second was Clarence Laughlin. I think I had better knock off a line to Weeks, saying Amen to his starter, and comparing notes further. We might run the danger of conspiracy charges or a combination for the restraint of trade, but an exchange of data on the point of undesirable pilgrims might prove helpful to both of us.

I thought I was sleepy last night but after going to bed, I discovered I wasn't. Today's storm must have already been brewing somewhere in the offing for the scratching on the radio made listening impossible, although there was no lightening and the air was warm and balmy. And so I arose and arranged a little musicale on the gallery, with much harpsichord and piano and one big orchestra, having fortified myself first with an electric fan to discourage insects and a couple of chicken sandwiches and a glass of chocolate milk. The bamboo was busy with billions of fireflies, all scurrying around with their little lanterns while over in the magnolia, heavy with ivory globes, hard by the Chapel, my old friend, the mocking bird, responded

8512

5479

to the first strains of Peter Illyovitch's Nutcracker,
and it was all very pleasant, and sleep wasn't long in catching
up with me in a nest.

J. H. flew up to Memphis last night to attend some
meeting of a Federal Cotton Board. He will probably fly
back tonight, and will not be too enchanted with the rain,
which up to now, and it is still drizzling, amounts to
about an inch, I should imagine. I believe one reason why
planters prefer heavy rains before planting and none afterward
is because of the effect of rain, not on the stem or leaves of
the plant but rather because ample surface water at the
early stages of the growing period induces the root system
to spread out around the stem just below the surface of
the earth instead of sending a tap root straight down into
the ground as its source of moisture. The spreading of the
roots, of course, tends to subject them to damage when
the hand hoeing and the tractor cultivation gets under way,
and then later in the season, should a prolonged dry period
develop, as it likely, the root system just below the surface
gets less moisture than would be the case were a generous
tap root present to plumb deep into the soil.

I understand Raynie and Frances have gone to the hospital
in Alexandria for another rest. Why they prefer a hospital to
home or some resort, I know not. I suppose perhaps one element
in the decision may be the scandal currently rocking the town.
I know not if they have seen their new sister-in-law, niece and
nephew but assume they have not, for it seems odd that having
lived in a small town for the last 25 years, they and nobody
else seems to know the new sister-in-law who, until quite
recently, has been a resident of the same place.

The name was June Walmsley.

All day I have been holding the thought the weather
may be fare in Manhattan and thereby make dashing about to
Kodak and the Post Office the easier. But if rain or
other circumstances haven't been co-operative, I hold another
thought with equal vigor, --that you aren't bothering with the
business at hand until things have cleared and smoothed out
a bit. It's so good of you to handle all this business,
it would be impossible for me to convey any notion of
how grateful my heart beats hammer out their message of
appreciation....

Joel Fletcher

5480

7/16

1812

Sunday, May 25th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A heavy shower about 2 o'clock this morning, followed by
full sun shine all day, brought a duplication of yesterday's
weather and much spurring of greenery all over the place.

Before the sun had penetrated the curtains of mist this
morning, I marched up the road to make a little round in
anticipation of crowds that might be up that way for the ball game
during the afternoon at the honkeytonk and a swing-out tonight.
Three of the grandiflora trees had huge candle-like buds, about
to unfold, and I thought it wiser to remove them forthwith, not
only to let the strength expended in making seeds go back into
the luxuriant growth of the limbs, but at the same time to save
any marauders from succumbing to the temptation of collecting
a fine and fragrant bouquet. On my return, I tried something
I had never attempted before, and it worked. I had brought
three or four of the tightly closed buds back with me, and
as they had been broken off short, they were possessed of stems not
exceeding a quarter of half an inch, which looked silly enough,
what with the buds being several inches in length. I put
some water in some little squat wine glasses and stood the
buds so the embryo stems would touch the water and the bud itself
rest on the rim of the glass, and place each on a side table and
one on the bidet. To my surprise and delight, all of them began
making motions within half an hour, and within a couple of hours,
each had unfolded completely, their petals flat down to the
surface on which the glasses rested, and covering them completely.
It seems to me I have heard some mention having tried such a
thing, but without any luck. I reckon today's venture
turned out alright because by coincidence, each bud chance to
be just at that stage when, had it remained on the tree, it
would have opened as soon as the sun had struck it. Be that
as it may, both the living room and boudoir are brimming over
with a heady perfume and while the occasional tables look
a little weighted down with such heavenly burdens, the effect
is altogether striking and pleasant.

The pilgrimage business, although not brisk, is sufficiently
active and yesterday I was glad to welcome a couple of maiden
ladies from town, --old friends of the Madam, -- the sisters
Tausin. They brought four or five ladies with them, and one of them

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turned out to be a friend of Robina's, and that made it doubly pleasant. They had stopped off to do Beaufort on their way down, and as they arrived here about 12:30, I have no idea when they thought plantation people eat, or, since it must have been approaching 3 when they got back to town, I wonder when they themselves usually break bread. Like so many others, non-residents of the plantation region, perhaps they think plantation people don't eat anyway and merely spend their lives lolling on the front gallery, fortified by mint juleps.

Oddly enough, although the sisters Tausin know everyone in town who were friends of the Madam, neither of them had ever seen or heard tell of the Melrose Plantation plate and expressed much impatience to obtain three, which they did.

I haven't seen any of the clippings but am told several Louisiana papers are carrying notices that a man of color is entering his candidacy for election as a member of the School Board in the Parish of Matchitoches. He is Reynald Friedman whose wife was of the old mulatto gentry family of Schætte. They live on the opposite bank of Cane River about a mile or so up the road, not far from la Balthazar. I know both husband and wife, --she teaches at St. Mathew's school, but have no idea as to his qualifications, although they would have to be mighty poor if they were worse than those possessed by some of the current hill billy Board members. Reynald is a descendant, -- son or grandson, of one of the non-Aryan Friedman gentlemen, living in the Bayou Matchez area, not far from Beaufort. I always laugh in my beard, as I may have remarked before, when I think how crazy the Ku Kluxers would be, and perhaps are, when in Reynald, who attends St. Augustin with his wife, they encounter in some single package a mulatto, a Catholic and a Jew. How the fiery crosses ought to flame at that one.

I made a foresome at dinner next door and for dessert we had cake that had been presented to J. H. yesterday by Sister who stopped at the store but didn't honor any one else, which, if I may say so, brought vast satisfaction to all, --including herself, I hope.

I have made a few inimitable sketch, as only I can scrawl, with a view to getting something suitable by way of a plate that will serve as a souvenir for the centenary celebration of something or other at St. Augustin's next June, or rather June of 1953.

I am fiddling with the portrait of Grandpere, the Church and a dab of Cane River but haven't achieved any satisfactory result as yet, but I shall have it shortly and have no doubt the ultimate product every mulatto attending the pow-wow next summer will want one, and perhaps some white folks, too. But how soon this chat played out.....

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*Miss Nellie
Mrs. Holloman
7/3*

Monday, May 26th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so let's talk about a plate for "Grandpere".

And that suggestion is made on the assumption that you have regained your composure, lost when you attempted, futilely, to make head or tail out of the attached inimitable rough sketch.

The first big tax on your imagination is to assume the sketch is more or less round. The next thing is to envision a modified reproduction of Grandpere's portrait slap in the middle of the plate. I am getting a good photograph without my presence appended from Mrs. Holloman.

About a third of the way up from the bottom of the portrait, we might have Cane River, in a curve, cut across the background.

Going slap to the top, we would have a tiny sketch of Grandpere's original home, with the notation:

"Montrose Plantation -- Augustin Metoyer -- 1768 - 18 whatever."

You may recall I got Clemence to paint a picture of that house in which she once lived. It looks like Melrose without the towers. It ought to delight the descendants to see it. Actually the name of the plantation wasn't Montrose, but I think that name will due nicely.

Then, slap at the bottom a sketch of the residence of Louis Metoyer, the joint builder of the Church. The notation will read "Louis Metoyer -- Melrose Plantation 17--- - 1832".

Melrose wasn't called Melrose during his life time but that doesn't matter, and we shall use Yucca for the sketch of the mulatto plantation home.

Then to the left side of the portrait we might enter the words, not like those on the original sketch, but so as to

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run something like this:

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

"Church of St. Augustin,
Melrose, Louisiana,

from the portrait of
Augustin Metoyer,

celebrated in Lyle Saxon's novel,
'Children of Strangers'".

Either just above this wording should be a motif of a
crossed brush (for portrait) and pen (for novel)

To the right of the portrait might run this legend:

"St. Augustin's Church,
built by the
brothers Metoyer, f.m.c. in 1829.

Dedicated in 1853.
Re-built in 1917.

Its centenary observed
in 1953.

The symbol of a cross, either above or below this note, would
balance the crossed pen and brush on the opposite side

Do tell me what you think about such a business. Celeste
will not see this original sketch but I told her I contemplated
making a plate for the Church and she instantly said millions
of multitoes would clamor for it. I wanted you to see the sketch
before I sent it along to Mina, together with the portrait of
Grandpere and the sketch and photo of Grandpere's house and of Yucca.

But even though it will have to be corrected, it will be
helpful if you will eventually return this rough layout for
my guidance, plus any suggestions you may have. The elaborate
plans for the centenary celebration a year from June are already
being made, so I should have ample time to fiddle with this
while cracking the whip over Corpus Christi and Rock Hill.

Mrs. Holloman's letter in today's post is enclosed and it
would seem she is ready for an article. I reckon the photos may
be here in a day or so, and I can get her busy on the Picayune
and Times(Shreveport) articles for the Cane River Country thing.

The weather is marvelous, everything jumping and not much
news. Paynie returned from the hospital today, reported the Wenks
sent Saturday evening with the Bands, --not with Dr. Rand, I am
sure, and Paynie plans to head out for a folie on Grande Isle,
and so things turn.

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Tuesday, May 27th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Friday letter in today's post.

I'm sorry you have had such a hectic week, but am
holding the thought you caught a breather over the week end.

And don't worry about the non-glossy prints. I believe
Edward's China will be a ble to operate in its preliminary
stages satisfactorily with the one you forwarded and I haven't
a doubt the glossy one will reach them in ample time to
bridge all gaps in time and production. Besides, we "don't
have to catch a train", and should the delay result a little,
not a particle of harm will be done. The important thing is
that they received the likeness of the sketch, and the rest
can be made to fit in nicely in all good time.

And speaking of mail, the package you mentioned as
going forward to me on the same day as your Friday letter will
no doubt arrive in tomorrow's post. I am glad you
advised me as to how the photograph came out. Isn't it nice that
the crack across the design didn't show. I'm sure the
print will provide selling appeal for the Baldwin-Carber-Holloman
editors and if and when the articles get printed, they ought
to do much to create interest in the plate, --and, as I have
noticed on other subjects, the interest in the matter will
be quickened many a time in subsequent months, long after
the article has been read and forgotten until the reader is
confronted by the actuality of what he has seen in print, so
that the effect of such notices vibrates long after the
day it appears in print.

Although I read Mrs. Holloman's letter hurriedly, I gather
she may be expected to pass this way before the end of the
week. I wrote her suggesting that she make it one of these days,
and not later than the first week in June. That will give
her a week or so to get her version typed and sent along
to the Picayune by the middle of the month, and as four weeks
are required to get the Magazine Section through the presses,
that ought to bring the thing about right for coinciding with
the delivery of the plates. So far as I am concerned, it
will be equally satisfactory if the Picayune article should
not appear until September or October, which would probably
be ideal.

As for Daisey in the Dell, scheduled for appearance on

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June 9th at this bend of the river, and armed with a print and an article, already completed but undoubtedly slated for a few Garber touches before going to the Dallas Morning News, that paper should have it easily by July and any time after that they care to publish it will be fine, although I have slanted the article with a view to appealing to the Travel Editor since by now, following the Melrose article, he ought to know that scads of Dallas-Fort Worth readers of his fine paper incline to explore this region regularly, and so should find the article of particular interest. I shall request Mrs. Holloman not to submit her rendition for the Shreveport Times until mid July but I have advised Helen her article can be published any time, and I am hoping it may appear in June or early July so I may use it to give to the Natchitoches Times for re-print, since it will probably be better done than any of the others.

I'm glad you like the idea of using the original sketch for display purposes in connection with the release of the plate. I think I shall perhaps use the Cane River or rather the Melrose Plantation sketch in connection with the Cane River Country plate, should The Village Shop in Alexandria want it at the time Natchitoches is using the other.

In the realm of society, it is my understanding that the bride and groom were callers across the fence last night and the elder of the two ladies reporting the visit this morning observed that everyone seemed more or less "ill at ease", which, under the circumstances, I reckon, would be quite understandable.

The day was cloudless up until a out first dark when a "scattered sprinkle" developed. Last week's rains had an adverse effect on the haying which is currently in full swing, what with half a thousand cattle to be fed next winter. Ben remarked that he wished the rain would hold off for a few more days, and I found myself thinking of how lucky is such an absentee landlord as Carolyn, sitting up in Washington, unmindful of local whimsies of the weather, and wondering if she has the type of tenant farmer on her place to worry about cattle eating too much green clover in May and anticipating needs for ample bales of hay along about January and February. Something tells me a place the size of Carolyn's isn't going to prosper much for her own benefit when left to the care of tenants.

I intended saying above that I agree with you regarding the desirability of reproducing a finished plate, if the newspapers will give space for two illustrations. I think Helen or Mrs. Holloman may concur, and either of them might have a shot made of the finished product, and if so we shall borrow the negative. Otherwise we might wait until all three items, currently cooking are available, to be caught in the same film. But I must stop for now but again my thanks for all the nice things you have undertaken for me.....

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Wednesday, May 28th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your two packages in this morning's post.

Both traveled in perfect condition, thanks to your expert wrapping, and not a bend or crease was to be noticed in either, so far as the outside was concerned. I have not opened the larger one as yet, but have explored the contents of the smaller, and found everything there so perfect, not only as to the actual photographic work but also the further example of your thoughtfulness in having enclosed the extra envelopes for mailing, that I am filled with gratitude to you for all these latest manifestations of all imaginable matters in my behalf, and this in spite of the hectic week through which you were passing. Somehow the plain word, Thanks, seems so inadequate, and yet I know you realize it wells up straight from the bottom of my heart.

And because of your having provided me with the extra mailing envelopes, I was able to address one to Helen forthwith, and thus send it out by the same mail to Helen who accordingly should have it about Friday at the latest, which will afford her an opportunity to contemplate it over the week end, if at home, and perhaps inspire her to do a feature article, --let us hope, -- which, while cutting scant amounts of ice in Waco or among Waco readers, save as a story, may well serve as a subtle advertising medium, if copied by Louisiana papers.

The drizzle continued all night and all day today, and is still coming down gently. The weather bureau says Shreveport as two and a half inches and Alexandria one inch. As we are in between, I suppose we are getting about an inch and a half and all this detail regarding the weather situation is to give you some concept of the dampness of things on the day the humming birds decided to put in their appearance. Naturally the floral buffets provided but soggy fare for our newly arrived feathered guests, and so, in my role of Grover Whalen, I immediately dusted off the glass feeding bottles, refurbished them with honey, and in five minutes the travelers were standing in line, proving for the billionth time in that non-human beings are ever ready to adjust themselves with

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vast adaptability to aids set forth by man for their convenience. I don't know how much intuitive power a humming bird may possess, but I shouldn't be surprised if in his dampened, hungry condition, he was projecting a thought wave of gratitude in the general direction of Lyme.

What with the dampness making out of door pursuits impracticable, it seemed to me an excellent opportunity to make use of the shelter of the Yucca gallery to have another go at sandpapering the blinds which are contrived into a screen. But before I had gone very far, the Dark Duke passed this way and took over the business with expert hand. And thus the dark green paint gradually disappeared and the wood colored base emerged. I procured some white paint, and on the morrow, the Dark Duke threatens to return to give me a hand at slapping on the paint. Personally I think painting blinds, especially the ones with shutters that are stationary, rather difficult, what with the paint having a tendency to move under its own steam toward the edges; but Log has assisted me in doing those on three sides of the Chapel, and he accomplished that undertaking with much dexterity and neatness, and I reckon his ~~sk~~ splash in the direction of the screen will be equally artistic.

It was a pleasure to chat with him, for the Dark Duke has a fine sense of humor, and without knowing it, he frequently scrambles his words just enough to make them doubly effective. For instance, he was talking about some colored bag who is cooking at one of the local camps on week ends. He said that before the season is half over she will probably not be thus employed. -- "she have so little sense and ain't got any understanding of how to treats people, and one of these days she'll be showing how disrespectful she can be to white folks".

Thus far this week I have received four letters from various sections, according to the cancellations, written by people who have probably passed this way recently, since each expresses some form of appreciation for the privilege of a tour, but in each case no address, either on envelope or letter, gives any hint as to point of origin, and while I probably called the different ones by name when introductions were exchanged, I have long since forgotten the identity of each. When addresses are given, I, of course, make it a point to acknowledge the letter but I certainly don't have to clog the post with such items when the address is omitted and the bond between the name and memory of the personality has faded.

Before I went to sleep last night, but after all lights had been extinguished, I was entranced at the sight of a little firefly sailing back and forth, his lantern all aglow along the tester above my recumbent figure. It was such a pleasant note to slide out on from consciousness to dreams.....

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Thursday, May 29th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so the rains eased off but the drizzles continued until the middle of the afternoon.

I shouldn't say it was ideal weather for painting but the Dark Duke came early this morning and under the shelter of the front gallery, put the primer coat on the three sections of the screen. The forecast is for warmer weather tonight and so perhaps he will be able to get the second coat on tomorrow, after which the hinges can be put on and the new screen will be "all set" with no especial place to put it, so far as I am concerned. Still, it will make a pretty object, perhaps for the gallery, and besides, it isn't being made for this particular season but for another when we shall be able to use it to advantage.

And speaking of screens, I'm wondering if I have mentioned what an opposite service from what it was intended the one of the Louisiana country has in my boudoir. I have it standing between the old Gayoso iron safe in the corner leading to the bath and Grandpere's clock, standing by the door on the gallery, designed to obliterate the trash that has a way of accumulating on the marble top of the chest of drawers stationed at that point. You may recall that on the wall above the iron safe stands or rather hangs little Miss Alberta's portrait of Victoria. As portraits go in this house, it is perhaps the least interesting of all, and I keep it there simply because Long and Peter sometimes like to pass this way and sit for a while and look at mama. But pilgrims who will pass up Father and Son, Grandpere and all the rest without so much as a glance will unexpectedly manifest a fascination, -- ostensibly, -- for Victoria's portrait. It is usually so obvious that it isn't their interest in the portrait at all but merely their consuming curiosity to discover what is behind the screen that I have now reached the point that I just laugh when someone starts edging in that direction and knock them down by recommending that they pay no attention to Victoria, who won't mind, but inviting them to look at the

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imposing assortment of things concealed by the screen. Three bags were here the other day and I followed that line when one of them started to nose in Victoria's direction. She greedily stuck out her neck and after taking a good gander, said she didn't find anything of interest there.

"Yes, Mammie," retorted one of her companions, "but you know perfectly well you would never have given us a minutes peace for the rest of the day if you had not had the opportunity to satisfy your curiosity."

And to that I added a silent "Amen", and was glad I didn't have the prospect of an entire "balance of the day" with such a bag. The next time somebody digs up a baby's skeleton, I should perhaps make use of it "behind that curtain", which, at least, would give the bags more of a start than they are hoping to find.

Locally we are on the verge of a series of afternoon and evening entertainments, - bridge parties and heaven knows what all, and Celeste is inclined to be rather jittery, what with all the things to be considered, - if the weather is going to be fine, if there will be adequate supplies of magnolias and gardenias, etc., etc., ad infinitum ad nauseum. In the midst of a torrent of such speculations this morning, she did digress momentarily to say that she had to stop in at the gift shop in town yesterday and was told that a couple of ladies had just left the place, searching for the Melrose Plantation plate. "he was asked about the prospects of anyone in town ever being able to secure them for public sale. It's pleasant to know there is a demand. I have about made up my mind I shall hold the Melrose Plantation Plate for a time, releasing the Cane River Country one first. After the initial saturation of the market with the latter, it seems to me the Plantation one could be eased onto the market so it can be offered as an excellent companion piece to the other, and probably, because it has been comparatively difficult to get, will be snapped up the more readily.

Eventually I finished "Mr. Lincoln and His Army", and discovered the title to be a fraud. The book should have justly been entitled "General McClelland and his Army of the Potomac" which was actually the only thing the book was about, but I suppose some smart publisher figured the name of the President would tend to sell the book whereas his unsuccessful military commander of 1862 would have excited nobody's interest.

The mails are thin, the secretaries thick, and so the week approaches its close. Do hope it holds in promise a quiet week end for you....

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Edwards Anna Jr
Daisy D. Jr
5490

Reminiscences of
Benjamin Johnston

Friday, May 30th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your grand letter of Monday in today's post.

I am so glad you had an opportunity to turn through a stack of unread papers over the week end, and while that may not represent complete relaxation, it suggests you had a couple of moments in which you could escape from the hum-drum of having to remain indoors on a rainy week end.

As usual, your information regarding the death of Frances Benjamin Johnston was the first inkling I had had of that event. As time goes on, I reckon I could begin to work up some kind of a superstition about Death knocking on the door of more than one acquaintance within a limited period. Little Miss Alberta, --Frances Benjamin Johnston, the Madam and Mr. Bachelier, --which is pure coincidence, of course, but it does strike one with force when one stops to try pinning the events within a limited time zone. The only joker in that superstition is the confirmation of the rule by an exception, for there are a number of people of color in this area whom Dr. Wenk has killed off, so to speak, within two or three days of each other, and they have all proved him a quack at predictions by simply refusing to fold up their pbeards.

I didn't see J. A. tonight at supper, as he is reported to be detained on business in Alexandria, but I shall probably see him at dinner on Sunday and I shall chide him for not having told me about the death of "his friend". I may have mentioned that he once called on Madam Benjamin at her Bourbon Street residence in the Crescent City, and how he explained that he was most cordially received because he had been foresighted enough to present the lady with a fifth of whiskey on his arrival, but, kindly, he razzed me about my unpopularity with the lady, saying she didn't at all like the letter I had written her, telling her not to bother keeping any of the promises she had made the Madam and me the year before.

One of the things the Madam was forever quoting was Lyle's admonition that she would be sorry if she ever invited "S. B." to Melrose, and then, as though to prove it, he himself dragged her here for a ten day stretch, leaving us to hold the bag while

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he, after the first three days, journeyed back to New Orleans by ambulance, with a fine case of *Mercurius Tremens*. I have probably mentioned that Aurellia, then the house girl, was scared to death of "that lady" whom when out of the Madam's hearing, she invariably referred to as "la Barbe", for Madam Johnston waved her long handled, old fashioned razor, while shaving her chin, in the direction of Aurellia, when the latter inadvertently passed through her room when "S. B." was in the midst of taking off her long beard.

I shall always be indebted to her for the question she put to me when I received her on the front gallery of the big house at 2 a.m., on her initial visit, loaded down with dozens of suitcases, cameras, an electric fan, a percolator and the Lord knows what other plunder. I extended a salutation of greetings and said if she would follow me up the stairs, I would show her to her room and bath. It was then she put her foot down and said, in spite of all the baggage I was weighted down with: -"Before I take the first step, I want to know just what your position in this household is."

But in view of all the circumstances obtaining at that strange hour, I simply brushed that one off by saying:

"Frankly, Miss Johnston, I have been here for years on end, and I, personally haven't discovered the answer to your question as yet, but if it's all the same to you, we might let the whole thing go until morning when both of us may solve the riddle to our mutual satisfaction."

That showed what a fool I was, for "S. B." never in her life saw the morning at Melrose, since the aroma of coffee permeating the air from the fireproof of her section of the house was never detected before 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and it was fortunate the sun set was late in those July days, or she never would have snapped a Cane River photograph.

Well, so much for America's most extraordinary lady photographers of the first half of the century. I'm glad I knew her but am thankful I shall never have to encounter her again, and, I hope, I shall never have to brush up against the lady said to be her counterpart, one Frances Parkinson Keyes.

The enclosures speak for themselves. The dizzy Daisey in the Dell by her note, makes her advent a matter of guess and speculation. She has just learned it is farther from Melrose to Dallas than she had supposed, which seems odd, and what with the Melrose Manuscript to discuss, the proposed article for the Dallas Morning News, not to mention the reading of Alice Walworth's book and all, plus her Mother to be received and perhaps a couple of aunts, -- it sounds as though the 15 minute sitting or whatever, ought to be fairly filled, especially if a couple of pilgrims are tossed in for good measure.

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Sunday, June 1st, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday Air Mail in Saturday's post. And for the billionth time, may I say thanks to you again for having dispatched the glossy prints, which undoubtedly will arrive in Monday's post, and may I thank you an equal number of times for your amazing and extraordinary help, as demonstrated by your question regarding "Oak Lawn", and at the same time, may I say thanks, too, for the delicious little vignette you gave me of how things are turning in your neighborhood. I want to re-read the letter, for there was one paragraph which was garbled for me because of an interruption about a broken dish, - could it have been a plate, and if so, don't worry about it.

You hadn't mentioned the birthday frolic of the girl friend, and I am always interested in news from that quarter. I think the theatre trickets a wonderful idea, and especially for the person to whom they were given. I have a feeling I know that of all people she would prefer to share the theatrical sitting with is none other than a lady from Lyme, and I hope that may eventuate, but whether or no, the choice of the gift for her, I think, was simply grand.

And as I lean on you so heavily for setting me straight on all sorts of things, may I again refer to the Oak Lawn business. I am astonished at your wonderful keen mind in catching this, if indeed, it is a catch, as is probably the case, unless, by chance, Friend Postell may have made a slight error, --and your question arriving at just this moment is so perfectly timed, since it affords me an opportunity to check on the matter and make the correction when the manufacturer's sketch arrives, which, I suppose, will be in a day or two. There are three plantations in the area or perhaps four, which are confusingly similar, - and all Prudhomme places, -- Live Oak, Oak Wood Oak Lawn and Oakland, and while it is no wonder they are readily inter-changed, it is quite possible that even the Prudhommes and Cloutiers get them mixed up now and then. What with Beth Williams Cloutier being the historian of the tribe, I telephoned her for two things when I was mulling out the original drawing on my own hook. First I asked her the name of the present Alphonse Prudhomme place, --the Phanor Prudhomme of "Old Louisiana" and of the Postell opus. She declared that to be Oak Lawn, but it is quite possible she was just as wrong as she could be. Next I asked her for a snapshot of Beaufort, which she promised to bring me next day, and hasn't shown up with as yet. I

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simply went ahead on making the sketch, drawing on my faulty memory as best I could for the details, and I guess it turned out about right.

The Alphonse (Phanor) Prudhommes do not have a telephone, but I shall run up there tomorrow and asked them if they know the name of their plantation, and I hope they do, and I shall be guided by what they themselves say. In the mean time my thanks for bringing up this matter, for naturally I want the thing to be as correct as possible.

Mrs. Owens, Blythe's sister-in-law, was gaining her strength back so fast that the Rands planned a big pow-wow at the campe for the entire week end, and among their guests was to be included a lady, recently accursed with faulty vision, who is unable to get herself adjusted to a "sweet-surrender", to quote old San Antonio, - and she was to be bounced into my lap. Blythe visited Mrs. Owens early Saturday morning at the hospital, found her wonderfully improved, and then headed up this way with a caravan of food and week end plunder and two or three servants to lend her a hand in making preparations. Dr. Rand telephoned an hour after Blythe had left home to say his sister had just died, and so I went over to the campe to convey the news which was to knock out the frolic but completely. I suppose the funeral may be today or tomorrow, we have heard nothing further, however.

And may I thank you for passing along the additional news regarding the burial of "S. B." Johnston. Come to think of it, she must have shaved off a few years to get an obituary giving her only 88 summers, for, as I recall, she passed for being 86 when visiting Melrose, which, if memory further serves correctly, was along about 1944. I don't see as it makes a particle of difference, but it is remarkable that she could have been so active and so "baggish" at such an advanced age.

It was "Bomb Sunday" at today's dinner, with the "enks being here in force. Sister wanted three dozen Melrose Plantation plates, and I had them for her. If she gives as companion pieces the Cane River Country plate to all who have received the Plantation one, she will just about exhaust the first 24 dozen as initially ordered.

I believe I sent you the Edward's China letter on Friday night. On receipt of it, I immediately air-mailed the Copyright Office in Washington, asking for appropriate forms to be filled out and filed for copyrighting the design. Edward's China was quite right about scant need of copyright, so far as pirating is concerned, but Edward's doesn't know of possible publicity that may slant the thing so that, as sometimes happens in the case of the "lantation items, some people want it for the personal association, and the publicity may enhance that tendency, and so I shall go ahead regardless, if Washington will be stir itself to the point of not holding up production through lack of supplying information. Again my thanks for the grand letter and blessings on you.....

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Monday, June 2nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

I had thought I would knock out quite a stack of mail last night, after our little chat, but the typewriter ribbon jumped the track, and so I suspended all operations on the Underwood and did a bit of radio listening instead.

And thus I heard the announcement of John Dewey's death and it brought back memories of lectures I had heard him deliver and while I never understood the man's theories very well, I believed him to be an exceptional person. Only last week I sandwiched in one of his philosophical volumes between "Mr. Lincoln and His Army", but, as several times in the past, I found that his phraseology was such, for my type of mind, that I usually lost the meaning of his sentences by getting tangled up in his word combinations. Come to think of it, I suppose one of the most remarkable things about Chinese and Jewish philosophy is the fact that so much of it is set forth with such clarity and simplicity that "he who runs may read", and Dr. Dewey, to my way of thinking, occupied an opposite pole, in that I spent so much mental effort trying to comprehend his ideas that I quickly became mental exhausted, and so lost most if not all of the vital points he undoubtedly was establishing.

I used to think, and still do, that if high school children must struggle with Caesar, Cicero, Virgil and the rest in original Latin, it would be so much better if they were given in the child's native tongue a year or two before being tossed into the mysteries of the syntax and construction of the original so the child would at least have some notion at what the subject matter was about before having to grapple pretty much in the dark not only with the strange language and its construction but the subject matter as well.

I have read several essays on the Dewey theories and yet I still require someone to set them forth in simple language for me, so that after comprehending what they are all about, I might be able to undertake an exploration of the original Dewey writings and eventually understand them a little.

But today's big news, of course, was the Supreme Court's decision that Mr. Truman did not have the inherent powers to take over the steel industry. That, of course, is an opinion but it seems to me it hinges simply on whether a sufficiently dangerous state of world affairs merited the seizure, and obviously the Court

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thought matters weren't sufficiently grave to warrant the Presidential move. But I believe historians of American Government pretty much agree that the powers of the President are pretty much a matter of interpretation and that almost anything can be effected by an executive, at least as a try, with the ultimate deciding factor resting about equally in the hands of the Court and the people. With the decision being 6 to 3, it is obvious the three members thought the situation called for Presidential intervention, and I suppose in future cases along parallel lines, it will remain for the courts again and again to make the decision and that the curb against the possibility of Presidential possibilities will not be imposed until after the act has been made.

On the home front, the cook went to town to consult the lay doctor who found a 240 blood pressure and sent her home to bed for a week. I hope she doesn't ever cook here again as she is a slovenly bag and what the negroes, remarkably free from the use of 4 and 5 letter words, describe as "jus' a plain son of a bitch".

Y. C.'s mama, Juanita, is filling in for a week or so and everybody seems entranced at her efforts which we knew in 1946, prior to the birth of a offspring which forced her to give up extra-domestic duties beyond the confines of her own hearth.

The weather is wonderfully hot and, thanks to last week's dampness, things are growing by leaps and bounds. Belatedly and at long last, the first cape jasmine unfolded its lovely petals today. It was on the big old bush hard by the chimney on Dr. Miller's cabin. Tonight it dances gaily here on my desk, making a note to every tap of the machine and shedding a fragrance that seems to out do everything of Andalusia and Araby all rolled into one. It has longed seemed to me that the first flowers of any variety to bloom at their particular season held a fragrance that is fresher than subsequent ones on the same bush or tree as the season advances further. Perhaps my sense of smell becomes jaded. Perhaps there is a difference in the perfume generated as the sap is altered by the change of the season and the using up of the first supply that has been considerably drawn on by the earlier blossoms. I must inquire about this from scientists from pure curiosity, for I cannot see, if it be true, that it would make the slightest difference to any one.

Mrs. Charles Wood appeared unannounced in the garden about 11 o'clock this morning, bringing drawing material, sandwiches, a thermos bottle, etc., and asked if she might try painting the big house. She was no more troublesome than the Kleisers and the results of her efforts at the close of day seemed to please her. Thus things turn and summer really gets under way. Mail be slowed up, what with a new post master at Bayou Natchez, a distributing and forwarding station.....it was so late today it might as well not have come

5496

Tuesday, June 3rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so, what with the enclosed letter from California today, and all, I thought you might be able to round up a modest seat for the theatre on the 18th, or perhaps invest in a nice quiet dinner some place or some such, and so the enclosure within the enclosure is tucked in herewith, and how pleasant it is to share these little windfalls with my L. of L., or rather L. of the L.

Thanks to your thoughtfulness in having the prints made of the portrait of G andpere, plus the sketch of the original St. Augustin's Church, I did business immediately today upon receipt of your shipment of the glossy prints which arrived ever so perfect in condition, although a day later than they would have under normal circumstances, what with a new postmaster at Natchez, La., getting the "works gummed up" a little. These will be so perfect for the articles, and again a billion thanks to you for having handled this business so generously on or to such a satisfactory conclusion.

The sight of the glossy prints impelled me to head slap into the birthday ones, and through dint of further research, I got settled a couple of outstanding points concerning both the Cane River Country item and also the St. Augustin layout.

You will roll on the floor, as did I, when I learned what I did from Alphense Fradhemme about the names of a couple of Jeyous Coast plantations. First off, let me bless you again for calling my attention to the Oakland business, for Oakland it is, according to Alphense, who ought to know, since he lives there, and as the sketch has not arrived from Edward's China for correction, I shall be able to handle that nicely in all good time. But here is where I fell out: - in speaking of the various Oaklands, Oakwoods, Oaklawns and so on, Alphense casually remarked, --and he knew nothing about what I was stirring:

"You know that old Fradhemme place up the river where the Guy Cloutiers now live, well, that place used to be called something else, but now they call it Oaklawn."

Well, what they are calling Oaklawn today is what was always known as Cashmere Plantation, and Cashmere plantation it is going to remain on the plate regardless, for I certainly want to call it by something other than an unimaginative 1950 appellation, and Cashmere was locally rather famous toward the close of the Civil War, for it was the first plantation in Central Louisiana

5497

whose owner, - a Prudhomme widow with several children, took the oath of allegiance to the Union Government, a pre-requisite before a pound of cotton or other transactions could be effected by any former citizens of Louisiana. In order to save their plantations from the tax gatherers, all the Prudhommess eventually had to take the same oath in order to get any money at all, but because the Lady of Cashmere had had the courage to go ahead and look after her family and plantation and thus conformed to the law, they never spoke to her again. Cashmere is a name that could be remembered, and Cashmere it will remain on the plate, don't you think so.

Well, because of the advent of the Glossies, my mind turned to finishing up the plate of Saint Augustin, and finish it, I did. I made a plate a couple of feet square, sketched madly, typed and pasted, and so got the whole thing rounded up, and shipped off to Mina for bringing it into line. Instead of using the crossed quill and paint brush over the notation at the left of the portrait, I substituted a couple of hearts, one super-imposed on about a half of the other, --one a dark heart, the other a white one, and thus the color combination, as suggested below in the script, as "Children of Strangers", --so the pictorial implication will be there for those with eyes, and for the rest, including the mulattoes, it will simply be a touch of Valentine insignia or some such.

Later in the afternoon I did what may be another pleasant stroke of business. Mildred Cunningham (Mrs. Peyton Cunningham) of Watchitoches telephoned to ask me to do her a favor, --giving a tour to some friends visiting her from New Orleans. I was delighted, and I thought the occasion excellent to ask her to return the favor by seeing to it that her brother-in-law, owner and editor of the Watchitoches Times, should allot ample space to the notice of the Cane River Country plate when it unfolds. Mildred was delighted at the opportunity to cooperate, and so I guess that department is as well taken care of in advance as could be hoped for.

I made a few last minute changes in the St. Augustin design, such as giving Grandpere's plantation, long since forgotten, not Montrose, as originally planned, but the much more logical one of St. Augustin's Plantation.. I sprinkled in a few nuts on that side of the river, and inserted a bit of cotton and pecane elements on the other side, and thus, in spite of too much writing, there will still be a bit of decorative interest. At the same time, I wrote la Cowperthwaite, asking when their dull season develops, so that this item may be put in production at the most convenient time in the future. I think it will not be necessary for us to photograph the final sketch, as I am making it round and it ought to be able to go slap into production without any alterations. And so the day turns, and so again do I want to thank you for the glossy prints in today's post, and all their creation on your part means.....

5498

Wednesday, June 4th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I had half expected letters from Rock Hill and Washington, but nothing from either source turned up. Perhaps tomorrow.

But as I was leaving the Post Office, the telephone rang for me. It was Carolyn, calling from Marshall. She chatted for about 20 minutes during which she explained she wouldn't get down before September, as she is sailing from New York on Tuesday and is in something of a jam for time. She hopes to get back a week or two before returning to the State Department. She says she plans quitting Government service in January. She said she had talked with Helen last night and that she is alright and half promised to fly over to Paris and back for a couple of weeks in July. How those girls do get around.

He said she had not seen Pat in Washington, as she had been heading for New York the day my letter reached her advising he was about to make his bow, and from New York she had flown directly to Raleigh, North Carolina on some Government business, after which she had headed for Marshall whence she leaves again on Friday. I guess I wouldn't get around to correspondence, were I so constantly on the jump but sometimes I think some of it is a chipmunk darting in and out a stone wall, getting the jumper precisely no place.

Not until midnight yesterday did I get around to turn through the recorded Talking Books Topics which came to hand in the morning's post. The thing embraced 56 titles and none of them were of much interest to me. What with the Library of Congress functioning so marvelously, it seems surprising that the section for the blind dwaddles along so poorly. I contemplate stirring up that department with a stick one of these days in hopes of getting mail acknowledged at least.

In yesterday's wee, had I not run out of space before I realized, I would have congratulated you again on your generosity in having made copies of the speech before the Historical Society last autumn, for, as the California letter indicated, your transcript had traveled across the nation and at least afforded la Storm pleasure, even though it may have proven a little hard on her dinner group who had to sit through it.

5499

The weather was in the 90's today and may account but probably doesn't, for a slackening of the pilgrimage trade. The Rands came this afternoon, bringing a fine jelly roll cake. Blythe seems happier than in months and Dr. Rand was rather on the gay side. I was glad his brother, Harry, from San Antonio, came, too. The death of their sister was touched upon but only that and nothing more. Dr. Rand, in speaking of her condition, two weeks ago when she had the stroke, indicated at that time he doubted if she would survive and so perhaps they were all as much prepared for her death as one ever is, --which isn't saying much usually, it seems to me.

The Payne Henry frolic on Grand Isle didn't last long. I believe they went there last Sunday night and on Tuesday Payne consulted a stomach specialist in New Orleans who found nothing particularly out of line with the stomach and so Payne took himself and his wife to the Alexandria hospital again.

I have about made up my mind he will outlive all the rest of the tribe and enjoy his real and imagined ailments all along the way.

One thing I learned from the Rands was of no importance whatsoever, but surprised me a little. They asked me how the new plate was coming along, remarking that Sister when calling on them a week ago, had told them I was engaged in stirring up a new one. As I had mentioned it to no one in Louisiana, I conclude Nina may have mentioned it in a letter to Sister, although at the inception of the matter, I had told her I wasn't mentioning it in Shreveport. Whether she knows about it in this month or next makes not the slightest difference to me, but it is remarkable how news gets about. I am reminded of the so-called "secret sessions behind closed doors" that Congress is always advising, the details of which are usually broadcast over the ether waves in a matter of hours, following the hearings.

I was glad to hear the Ed. Morrow review of the Eisenhower Kansas speech, and later tonight will fish around in the ether waves to see if I can't find it broadcast, perhaps over Des Moines.

I gather it was a conservative statement of general ideas as to various questions before the country, and I am inclined to think that approach to the election will draw as many votes in the long run as will Mr. Taft's sarcasm. I still can't imagine real Republicans voting in the convention for anyone but the Ohio Senator who seems to stand to the nth degree for everything the Republicans have stood for since the Civil War, but I hope there are enough people in the party to see the folly of following the old road they have travelled so much to their disadvantage during the past quarter of a century, and so sheet the General rather than the Senator at Chicago, but if they do, I fear, the Senator will die of fury. There's a big moon tonight and a big musicale just in the offing and it will be so pleasant letting thoughts run toward Lyme....

Dora 6/3

5500

Thursday, June 5th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Saturday letter in this morning's post.

I have read and relished every word, but have not run through the enclosure, which I am saving until the morrow, as the post was rather heavy, but not with anything from Rock Hill or Washington. The package came, too, and that also is sitting unwrapped on the shelf in the bookcase. And may I thank you billions for all.

It is so heartening to know the prolonged week end turned out so nicely. How good to know that in spite of the dampness outside, you were able to catch a "breather" indoors, and so get caught up on a flock of odds and ends.

I am so glad you gave me your impressions regarding the date of Grandpere's portrait. I think it important to include a date in the data going into the plate, and in making up the original layout, forwarded to Nina along about Tuesday or perhaps Monday, I put down the year, 1836. The signature on the portrait carries that date, and from some quarter, I have forgotten just where, --perhaps from that Delgado gentleman, I understood the artist, --Feuville, or Serville, or whatever, came to Natchitoches in the summer of 1836 to paint old Judge Henry A. Allard, and that seemed to dovetail neatly with the date on the portrait itself. And so I used that date, but frankly, I'm inclined to think the 1849 date might, actually, be the correct one, for, as evidence, there is the notation in the Madam's hand which you cited, and the equally and perhaps even more telling point offered by yourself, -- the absence of any reference to the portrait in the will Grandpere drew in 1840.

I am so glad you brought up this 1849 point on mere grounds of one, for it ends to make several aspects of the whole portrait much clearer in my own mind, and besides, every time we contemplate the finished plate and read the 1836 notation, it will stand as a little beacon to both of us as a point on which we both pondered jointly when the thing was in the making.

I'm so glad you asked about Frank. He lives in Shreveport and on occasion has done some work for Robina. She hasn't mentioned him lately and I shall ask her about him the next time I write.

5501

He was the best servant Melrose ever had until a whole flock of people and circumstances impelled him to forget his troubles, --and they were genuine, in the cup. I suppose he left Melrose for Chrevoport somewhere between 1942 and 1944. White people mulattoes and negroes on the plantation, whenever anyone mentions coffee, sigh a nostalgic sigh, and agree that never could anyone, before or since, make coffee like Frank, and not only did he know how to make it, but always, whether he was happy or sad, frelicsome or sober, it was always and forever the same.

You may remember the photograph of his younger boy, little Frank, which was in the group of mulattoes in the manuscript on Melrose. He was the little boy wearing a slightly tattered straw hat.

Frank's older boy, Tony went to New Orleans for a while where he worked for Lyle. Later he returned to Melrose and I may have reported in some Memo around about 1940 or 1941 that the last time I saw him, he had asked me for a cigarette, which I had given him but was out of matches. He accordingly put the cigarettes in his pocket and proceeded down the road to a henkey-tenk and on entering the place, asked somebody standing at the bar for a light. The man said sure and, pulling out a revolver, shot Tony dead, --and for a long time after that I was want to speculate on what different course Fate might have taken that night, had I chanced to have a match.

And moving from the safe-ar-lait to ebony, I found myself a bit puzzled today when the Dark Duke, leaving his tractor behind the bamboo where he was cultivating cotton, came by to say Howdy and to ask me a question. I think I mentioned he own occupies Clemence's house, and several trees and bushes grow luxuriantly about the place. He said he wondered if I could tell him the name of the tree growing at the corner of his yard that was shaped like an armabelle, had fine leaves and some pretty flowers. I inquired about its height, and in describing it further, he described an arc at the same time, usggesting the shape, which gave me the key I needed to unlock the armabelle. At first I had pictured one of those strange little hard shelled animals that live in this region but by the motion of his arms, he divested my mind of the animal and provided me with an umbrella, and when I pointed to a tree, growing slap out of the corner of the Chapel, he grinned mightily and declared it to be the same thing, --a mimesis news items on the home front, and I must fold, first, across the fence 20 ladies were entertained at bridge, and second, I have but one complaint against Juanita, who by the way, looks just like Zelma whom we saw marching to Arenbourg, for Juanita is cooking such delicious food that if she remains more than a week as high priestess of the pots and pans, I shall be falling away to a ton.....

Miss Melrose 6/4/52

5502

Friday, Jun 6th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so the post arrived on schedule this morning, bringing not a peep out of the Copyright Office but bearing the desired final arrangement from Rock Hill.

Obviously they have done a splendid job with but a couple of points to be brought to their attention, such as, thank to you, the change of the name from Oak Lawn to Oakland Plantation.

Slap at the top of the plate they had introduced a compass like the one on the Melrose Plantation plate, and pointing in the right direction. I noticed a smudge just to the right of the compass and was told by Lee who was running over the thing with me that it was "a gang of trees".

I reckon they need a little something to fill in a void between the compass and the cartouches carrying the words "Cane RiverCountry", etc

You will be floored, as was I, when you realize that this "gang of trees", introduced purely for decorative purposes, chanced to fall slap where Briarwood would be situated. I shall accordingly instruct Rock Hill to write the word, Briarwood, slap under the "gang of trees", and thus the Dermens will get into the picture without anybody ever having planned it so.

I think this will probably please la Storm and I think the Dermens wont mind, and as iris pilgrims from all over eventually find their way to Briarwood, this additional feature, so completely unpremeditated will find favor on all sides, and you may be sure I shall never breath a word to anyone that it wasn't all fore-ordained.

I doubt if in all the history of design anything thus unwittingly introduced by people thousands of miles away and completely ignorant of the region being worked on could ever have chanced on anything so perfect and so pat, and I scream every time I think of it.

And, as between this paragraph and the one next above, it occurs to me I may take advantage of the space, slap at the bottom of the plate where there's a vacancy between Kisatchie National Forest on the left and Uncle Tom's Cabin on the right. In that

5503

space, and running along the rim of the design, I think I shall recommend that Rock Hill introduce these words:

"Created - 1952 - Francois Mignon".

This will enable me to start the O.Kayed final proof back to Rock Hill on Saturday and thus save a good slice of an entire week, were I to hold it until Monday awaiting some word from the Copyright Office, which, in its dawdling fashion, may or may not take a couple of weeks to respond. In case Saturday's or Monday post such bring the desired information, I can air mail instructions to Rock Hill so it will reach there by the time the approved sketch does, and the appropriate words for copyright can be substituted for the ones mentioned above. And if the information doesn't come to hand before production begins, then the thing can go through as is, bearing the signified substitute words, and the main object of the business will have been accomplished regardless.

On the home front, the thermometer continues in the 90's and the sun altogether torrid. Celeste tells me the party of yesterday was a great success, and circumstances fitted into place so neatly that Madam Regard didn't collapse until after the last guest had departed, whereupon she began to vomit and took to her bed, the lady doctor being summoned about first dark and wonder expressed all around that exhaustion should ever catch up with those whose lives primarily are devoted to pleasure. But in spite of all the evident sprightliness of the chipmunk, perhaps many an old stone wall conceals more than one, worn out from incessant darting in and out.

Half the Cane River negro population had a vast frolic last night, what with a wake being held on Mangolia for a 12 year old girl who dropped dead returning with her parents from Church on Sunday night. Peter attended and told me it was pitiful to see so many little folks, friends of the girl, each bringing a scape jessamine or two, and tears running down their cheeks as they placed them on the coffin of their departed little friend.

Today's pilgrims included five members of the teaching profession from somewhere in the Tulsa neighborhood of Oklahoma. On entering the front gate, they halted abruptly to gaze at the big palm and to ask me what that kind of a tree was called. I assumed they meant the botanical name, Derrangiana, but that didn't seem to register, and then I discovered they didn't know it was a palm. In this day and age, I thought everybody on earth from pictures in a million publications, would recognize a palm tree, but it seems I could be wrong. I must pass that information along to Dora who really ought to love it.

I have a hunch the week end may turn out fairly full, perhaps Mrs. Holloman, Mrs. Combs, "obina, the Bands, etc., but perhaps not. Do hope yours matches last week's.....

Note: - one day's delay in posting this.

5504

Sunday, June 8th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It seems odd now, as I think back on it, how twice last week I remarked to Celeste and Madam Regard that I had such a moving sensation of urgency in getting off the St. Augustin business to Nina.

And then in Saturday's post came Nina's letter, misdated Wednesday, June 6th, with the Wednesday being correct, of course, since it came to hand on Saturday, June 7th, confiding that on the day before she had suddenly decided to take off for South America at the end of the month.

The lay-out for St. Augustin's had been forwarded to her on Monday, I believe, and so must have reached her almost immediately after she posted her letter to me.

Naturally, as soon as I read her letter, I immediately dashed off a note to her, asking her to disregard my letter and the plans, saying that as the business was not scheduled for release until 1953, it could be taken care of in all good time after her return from South of the Equator.

Surely when one is planning such a jaunt, one has plenty of odds and ends to take up one's time and energy without having the additional bother of fiddling with such a thing as St. Augustin's. Still, as the material in question must have reached her late on June 4th or early on June 5th, three full weeks intervene between then and her sailing date, and I am under the impression she may try to squeeze it in regardless, and if so, it will be a very pleasant feeling to know the thing is done and resting on the holding shelf until the appropriate time arrives for it to go forward to Rock Hill. And so I shall be looking for a line from Corpus Christi during the ensuing week, and then we shall see what we shall see.

About a year intervenes between now and the best time to release "Grandpere" but I figure it this way, --if Nina returns in October, she will probably have lots of things on her mind up to and through the holidays. A couple of months must be figured for manufacturing and delivery of the item in question -- assuming that all goes according to Hoyle, but there is always the chance Nina might not get around to work on the thing until well into 1953 and the first thing I would know would be the fact that the time had run out and the job not accomplished, and so I think I shall undertake it right away regardless, and if not through her, through some other artist.

5505

You will not be especially surprised at me for saying I have wished a billion times since Friday that we both might cull the last issue of Life together and explore the script as well as the pictures together. I suppose this collection of ante bellum Louisiana homes is the result of that visit - life representatives were making down this way a while back when Baton Rouge telephoned to ask if they might come to "elrose."

There were so many pictures I should have liked to look over with you, for there were ample to be admired, such as that most elegant of avenues leading to the home of "Nanking Nan", and it would have been fun to have a go at Mrs. Frank Percy on her elegant gallery overlooking the reflecting pool that "would float a mule". Perhaps I imagine it, perhaps there is something to it, but you can decide for me in the matter of Belle Grove, what with the clarity of your vision to determine the matter. By folding the magazine back at the same so that you see but half of the double spread of Belle Grove, the house will be cut pretty much in two, with the colonnade at the left quite separate from the other appearing on the page folded back. It seems to me the photograph on the left page, actually the front facing the river, the proportion of the architectural design is so perfect that one scarcely grasps the magnitude of the structure. Then, glancing at the other side, - the colonnade on the right hand page, it seems to me one more easily grasps how huge the structure really is. Perhaps both give the same impression in this picture and I am biased by the impressions I have received when viewing the actual building, which, in turn, may have been effected by the lights and shades obtaining at the various times I have visited it. I think I have mentioned before how little Miss Alberta ~~was~~ went to great trouble to paint Belle Grove once from the front, and when she got the canvas home, she was consumed by perplexity because the proportions she had achieved were such that the massive pile she had transposed on to canvas, looked precisely the size of a doll's house.

I had expected mail on Saturday from Daisey in the Dell, saying at what hour I might expect her and her caravan on the morrow; another from Mrs. Helleman which didn't turn up, and a third from Robina saying she might pass this way this week end, as I had advised her last Monday that the Wenks would be in Chicago. Perhaps in tomorrow's post at 9 will come a letter from Daisey Dell telling me that she expects to arrive at 8:30, in which she will be convenient to hand to read the epistle for me.

But I must get busy and knock off some letters now. It has been a quiet week end for me and may it have been equally so for you

5506

Daisy's Visit

Monday, June 9th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The weather is what might be described as host as a biscuit.

But it is altogether pleasant and these last days have been doubly precious, holding, as they do, such pleasant memories of yesteryear.

But the mornings are cool, even as then, and marching up the road an inspiration at this particular season, what with the ozone net being considered at all but merely another walk at another time, which has a way of lingering with unusual vividness at this particular season.

And this morning, on quite another front, was pleasant enough, both from the weather viewpoint and the little visit paid by Daisey in the Dell and her mama. They arrived about 9 and so had a brief cup of coffee across the fence, after which mama inspected the gardens and houses on her own hook while Daisey in the Dell and covered quite a bit of ground undisturbed at Hucca.

We went into the manuscript rather thoroughly, and it was back in her car again when they pulled out at 11 o'clock. She wants to finish her detective story or whatever, naturally, and then wants to have a go at the manuscript. I thought it might just as well be in her hands since at the moment she is the only one sufficiently acquainted with the local set up to give it the pains it requires for assimilation. For one thing, Daisey in the Dell is possessed of that rare enthusiasm about ante bellum business and seems possessed of something like a here worshipper's concept of the "adam", and these two virtues, plus her acquaintance with some of the personalities appearing ~~thru~~ in the script will or could go far in moving her to do something about it. It might just as well be within her reach to prod her a little at each glance in its direction, and if nothing happens after a while, and some other medium presents itself to labor with love over the manuscript, then I can always ask her to send it back.

Her virtue of honesty and fair dealing almost presented a problem. I gave her the article for the Dallas Morning News to read while I took mama on a quick little tour. On my return she

5507

expressed her enthusiasm for it and said she would most certainly submit it, after adding a little filler, to the Dallas paper, but then I might be sure my name would be on the by line. Now the fact is that the article devotes itself to telling how really wonderful the series of plates really is, and if the article were to appear under my name, it would not only be ridiculous but would wreck the career of any Editor who would ever publish such a thing about someone whose name appears as the author, for while it could be contrived as some sort of an autobiographical thing, it could never pass as such in the third person fashion in which it is written. I almost had to start withdrawing the thing from her hands before she finally consented to use some name, --any old name, I didn't care whose, in offering it to the newspaper.

I had written 6 or 8 pages which seemed adequate to me, but she wanted lots of details about the various places appearing on the map of the "ancient" river country, and so before folding up my hand tonight, I shall write her five or six single spaced pages giving endless details about the various illustrations, and from there on out, she can add to and subtract from and change about and do as she pleases, and all I ask is that the map itself gets into print.

The dawdling Copyright Office never came through with any response to my urgent request for suitable forms, and since production is being held for that, I air mailed Rock Hill to let the paltes roll, inserting, in place of the copyright notice at the bottom of the plate this simple combination of words: -

"Contrived - 1952 - Francois Mignon".

It is possible this pseudo-signature may influence the demand among friends and among collectors, and it may not. I was glad Nina carried out my request that her name appear, as you have noticed it does, along side the fisherman at the bend of the river. I have asked her to include her name on a bale of cotton, a skiff or some such on the sketch of Grandpere's plate, and thus two names get on the single item which is certainly ample. And speaking of Nina, nothing came to hand from her today, meaning nothing, but probably tomorrow something will, meaning much, whether it be "yes" or "no".

By tomorrow, possibly tonight, Mrs. Helleman should receive the Picayune article and glossy print which I posted to her this morning, not caring to await her advent in person any longer. And what a hodge-podge letter this turned out to be, but there is always a chance that tomorrow's can't be worse. Still it started out in a perfect reflection of my mood which I now recapture and get on with my work.....

5508

10
Tuesday, June 4th, 1952.

"Fore-warned is fore-armed", and I don't mind telling you this is going to be a dull letter.

In the first place the weather is sizzling in the 90's, and in the second place I was bogged down with people from 8 until 6, --and some of them were mighty dull.

There were some nice people from Florida who had never heard of Melrose when arriving in Matchitoches but who somehow managed to get here before mail time, and lingered rather long but the morning was comparatively cool and so it wasn't so bad.

They were followed by some California people who were alright but had scant capacity to comprehend what Melrose was all about. I understood them to say they were movie executives, as seemed to be borne out when, after some deliberation on their part, one of them asked if I would care to sell the Chapel intact, mud walls and all. I wouldn't.

And then just as the dinner bell was ringing Dolly Wlamsley and a friend from San Antonio blew in. The widow Walmsley and her late husband were want to come here in the old days but I hadn't seen Dolly since the Madam's death. She is a kind hearted person but is a born hoyden and with nothing to do in life, tries her best never to move on until the last thing has been exhausted, including her hosts. She and her husband, Robert, had been kind to Paynie when he was starting out in life, and I was glad to see Paynie and Frances at the dinner table, thinking it might give me a breather after dinner, but it didn't. They returned to Yucca with me and remained until 2:30 when they announced they were going to call on Celeste and Madam Regard. I didn't tell them Celeste was spending the day in Alexandria... I am sure they remained with Madam Regard for hours, although I didn't examine their calendar closely, as Mrs. Helleman and a friend was coming in the front gate as Dolly and her companion were going out the side one.

Mrs. Helleman had not called at the Post Office for her mail before heading up this way and so the article which I had mailed her yesterday, --of which I had made no copy, was sitting in Alexandria, while she had come up with a view to running through the unseen manuscript with me.

5509

I dictated another to her, stressing points I may have touched on lightly in the other one awaiting her at home, along with the glossy print. She says the Picayune will certainly want a picture of me and of one of the plates. I told her she could use the one of me standing by the portrait of Grandpere and she herself could photograph the Melrose Plantation plate.

She will look over the written and dictated drafts within the next couple of days and try to return to Melrose on Saturday afternoon or Sunday, for a final check on the piece, after which, but at the same sitting, I hope, we shall be able to stir up a parallel one for the Shreveport Times.

In a recent note, Robina threatened to come "one Saturday" during the month. I hope both ladies don't select the same afternoon.

For some time I have been intending to mention one of the peculiarities of the Columbia Broadcasting Station of Shreveport, -- K W K H. It is a fifty thousand watt outfit, and serves a wide area in this section of the country. I don't recall about the Eastern stations, but it seems to me all the stations I have ever heard have begun their day of broadcasting by playing the Star Spangled Banner. That has been true of K W K H, too, until comparatively recently. Now, instead of starting the day with the National Anthem, it makes it bow to the tune of Dixie.

The station is owned by the Shreveport Times, more Republican than the Herald Tribune, and has always been inordinately anti-Roosevelt and anti-Truman, but somehow it comes as a surprise to learn that it even goes so far as to be anti-National Anthem. I must remember to pass that along to Dora.

A thin mail brought nothing from down Corpus Christi way, which may or may not mean Nina, complying with my request, has returned the original plants for the St. Augustin plate, or perhaps has rolled up her sleeves and gone at it hammer and tongs.

I suppose this 5 a.m. clarion call to the Dixiecrats is the battle hymn of this group, which, shorn of all its mumbo-gumbo trappings is nothing more or less than a Republican in wolf's clothing. I wish all the Senator Byrds would give up their pose as Democrats and join the Taft Republicans of which all the Byrds seem to be in everything except in name. It's unthinkable, of course, that if the Republicans nominate Taft, the Democrats would ever name Eisenhower, but I certainly wish they would who would trounce the Ohio hands down.

But I think I have sufficiently proven my statement at the beginning of this memo, and so I shall herewith leap into a hot bath and thence knock off a bit of mail in and then call it a day....

5510

1123 Melrose from Rock Hill,

Wednesday, June 10th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Now nice to find your four page letter of Saturday in this morning's post.

Circumstances prevented me from reading more than the first 4th, but that was enough to make the balance of my day a happy one, and then there is the added anticipation of tomorrow's pleasure in further exploration.

I shall be holding the thought that you will be successful in your attempt to track down a ticket for the 18th, for I know it will mean twice as much to the girl friend if she realizes that you, too, are in the audience, and it's going to be fun for you, too, just enjoying the same piece over again.

It is so wonderful that you got a break again in such quick succession, and I am hoping you didn't spend all your time on correspondence but gave yourself a few moment of relaxation as well.

In response to your inquiry regarding meeting the invoice from Rock Hill, I hasten to say that I have successfully negotiated these shoals. Just in advance of the arrival of the invoice, I disposed of three dozen Melrose Plantation items at a single throw, which was a step in the right direction. And then I borrowed a year's advance on my salary which completely turned the trick. This I shall be able to pay back in part by the first of August, I suppose, since the Cane River Country items should be here by the end of July, and although I may be mistaken, I am under the impression I shall have no difficulty in disposing of the 24 dozen plates within a very short time which will enable me to pay back on the salary, and, I hope, leave enough to pay for a small order of the St. Augustin plate when it is ready to go into production. Frankly, and for what reason I know not, I did not want to touch the 200 Bachelier dollars in the Matchiteches bank on which a check has been drawn in favor of little Miss Lee. It might have been just as simple to draw on that account, but somehow it makes me happier to know that that remains intact and that should little Miss Lee ever have occasion to draw on it, she will have the assurance that it can be so drawn in full without any question as to the full amount.

5511

Today's pilgrims were too numerous to permit any of them to sign the guest book, which I regret, since they represented a rather unusual cross section of humanity for a single concentrated afternoon. At dinner we fed the master mechanic who is putting the gin in order, a stalwart, kindly person who probably came from the hill-billy section. His assistant was a man or like antecedents who told me he and his wife and five children had gone to Bible School in St. Paul, Minnesota last year and that while he has a church where he preaches somewhere in the Parish, he is working as a mechanic during the week to pay back the money he borrowed to go to Bible School. I invited them on a tour, following dinner. I slanted the thing to suit their limited cultural aspirations and I believe they enjoyed themselves. The Chapel was a distinct shock to the mechanic preacher. He fell silent from that point until he was heading back to the gin, when he wheeled around, clasped me by both hands and declared with some fervor:

"You have shown me the Light," --and was gone.

J. A. appeared shortly later with a sister-in-law of Wurtell's widow, --some of the Garrett kin folks from Lost River down Parlange way, I believe. I had pilgrims waiting for me before they left, and these included some college professors and a grand personality from Hamburg who has been studying Child Psychology at N. Y. U. She lost her mind over Clemence's things and I only regret she is leaving Louisiana on the morrow, for she was one of those people, rare enough, who instinctively sense what Melrose is all about.

And that brings me to Marie Antoinette who doesn't, and a mild tempest is brewing because "something's got to be done about people who are forever telephoning to inquire about a tour". It has always seemed so simple for her to tell them to telephone me through the store, but that seems to be a hurdle she can't comprehend. If the New Orleans and Dallas publicity comes off as anticipated, that lady is likely to be heading for a fit and doesn't know it. If she makes enough racket, she probably could get the front gate chained which would probably put a dent in the impending bow of the Cane River Country plate, but I am hoping to be able to short-circuit her selfish tirades.

So turns the day, and the sun has blazed away mightily, and the grass is about hoed out of the cotton and Y. C. will depart Sunday for Shreveport to cut lawns for the balance of the season, and then go to school there when autumn comes. 't's 81 at 9 o'clock tonight, but a brisk fan keeps things pleasant and in my armchair awaits the balance of your letter for the morrow....

5512

Thursday, Jun 13th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It was so good, having the balance of your letter today, and the best part of it was the chance you might have to fill up the lungs with Mt. Kisco ozone and to indulge the body a bit by stretching out in a beach chair, far from the beach. I hope everything went according to plan, that the weather was cooperative and the day an enormous success.

And may I thank you endlessly for all the particulars about impending events in the field of research. The study of mankind's history sounds titanic and wonderful, and all the other items cited are equally thrilling. I am so glad to have these particulars, and shall run through them again from time to time to digest them thoroughly.

And may I thank you for letting me re-read little Miss Alberta's last letter, whose contents I had forgotten. I never will need the original, but I do appreciate your thoughtfulness in sending along the transcript to re-acquaint me with the last communication. I never did have a response to the condolence letters sent her relatives, and no one I am acquainted with seems to know what, if any, disposition was made of her New Orleans property including the portrait of Lyle which somebody or other had contrived, --perhaps Edith Fairfax Davenport.

There was a letter in today's post from Friend Postell, and since he is a resident of the Crescent City, he may have some news, and I shall inquire, although I reckon I may not see him before he heads up this way in July.

And speaking of July impells me to congratulate you on your impending time out for rest, and I hope above everything that this "breather" will provide you with an opportunity to do lots of nothing save rest. Unless I hear to the contrary, I shall assume that our daily chats may jog along just as usual, and that you will always advise me if there should ever be a hold up in that department. I shall take it as a matter of course that the box will continue to hold its little envelopes until you pick them up, even though several days might actually elapse between visits to their little compartment mid-town.

5513

There was a telephone call this noon from Mrs. Holleman. She wanted to tell me that she had received the article alright and liked it better than the one I had dictated to her the other day, and that she had read it to Mr. Holleman who was very enthusiastic about it as sent, and suggested she forward it forthwith to the Picayune. This she is doing so that it will be on the Editor's desk on Monday morning, along with the glossy print, which Mrs. H. thinks a splendid piece of photographic work, --it is so clear and distinct in every detail. She says she feels certain the Editor is going to want some additional pictures, and she will mention the one of me gazing at Grandpere, --a very suitable one for the article, since I have given considerable space to that subject in the article, but if the Editor wishes additional ones, she will head up this way on the following Saturday and see what we can stir up. And if he accepts the article and glossy print as is, she will come up regardless so that I may dictate an article on the subject matter but with a different approach which can be used by the "Hreveport Times". Personally, I shouldn't be surprised if the Picayune article didn't appear until early autumn, which will suit me alright, but if it is accepted forthwith, I shall use its impending bow as a pry to work on Daisy in the Dell to persuade the Dallas Morning News to get a move on, and what would be most satisfactory for our side, of course, would be to have the Dallas article appear just about two weeks before the Picayune one comes out, for by then the article will already have been printed in the Picayune Magazine section, --a month elapses between printing and release, and therefore cannot be withdrawn, so that big guns of publicity from the North can cover the field well in advance before the Salvo from the South scatters the thing across the Gulf area. Thus before the reverberations of the one have died out, the second big blast will strike the attention of those who may have missed it on the first go-round, thus canvassing the whole territory pretty thoroughly.

Naturally I want you to have a couple or as many of the Cane River Country numbers just as soon as they appear, but I of course foresee the inconvenience they might occasion because Lestan, the Second, will probably find his name on the page of this pictorial book on porcelain. Unless you request otherwise, I'll send one along regardless, and if you find it inconvenient to retain, just toss it in the first trash basket, being assured that others will always be reserved to fill your wishes at any subsequent time.

I am consumed with admiration these days for little Miss Lee who "holds the fort" with such courage and faith, and if only, Biblically speaking, I were able to help "hold up Moses' hands", it would give me such vast satisfaction....

Edwards Clinic
6/12
5514

May Balthazar

Friday, June 13th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The heat continues and thanks to the heavy dews each night, vegetation continues to flourish.

Mrs. Richardson Ayres of Alexandria and her daughter, Josephine, came to see me this morning. Mrs. Ayres is the daughter of Miss Kate Davis of Natchez, and her husband the son of Aunt Nellie whose mother Mary Lambdin's aunt. I think I may have mentioned Aunt Nellie and Aunt Corinne, who own Roseland Plantation adjoining Windy Hill, and occupy a town house, in Natchez, - Melmont.

Mrs. Ayres was casting about Tennessee in search of family relationships, as her great great grandmother was a daughter of Charles Dickinson, whose son married one of Joseph Erwin's daughters, and got himself killed in a duel with one Andrew Jackson. By now, you must be completely lost, and so I shall hasten on to say that Dr. Crabb, President of Peabody College at Nashville had been consulted by Mrs. Ayres and while he couldn't help her out much, he suggested that the only person in Tennessee who might be able to throw a little light in her direction would be Lestan the Second who perhaps had heard all the details from Miss Cammie and who might have access to some family records that would turn the trick. I was glad I could.

I must rush on to say in parenthesis to recall that it was Aunt Nellie who with her husband inherited three fortunes successively, squandered two, retained the third, invested in no account land near Lafayette, La., and struck oil, and then woke up one morning during the past decade to discover oil spouting on their old Roseland Plantation. It was Aunt Nellie who casually pulled that line that floored me years ago when, in remarking about the ups and downs of Fortune, remarked that "and so having lost all our money, we closed Roseland and moving closer to Natchez, rented Longwood which we occupied for several seasons". Now "down to the last yacht" is one thing, but losing all one's money, and therefore renting Longwood, of all places, beats anything I have ever heard.

May Balthazar chanced to come into the store this afternoon when I was on the telephone. She waited for me and explained that a mulatto lady, some relative of hers, had seen the Melrose plate, and had asked her to ask me if it might be possible for her to acquire one. Answer: --it would.

5515

I feel sorry for May, an intelligent mulatto woman, perhaps 45 or 50, crippled slightly, and living alone in her comfortable plantation home, operating the plantation on her own hook, raising scads of chickens and turkeys and probably always having craved companionship that few of her mulatto friends appreciated. A man married her a few years back, lived with her long enough to get the family jewels which were quite valuable, I believe, and then quit her, and thereupon died. I am under the impression May would love to cultivate friendships both across the fence and on this side, too, but her strick mulatto up-bringing makes it impossible for her to forget the vast chasm between the mulatto and the white, and thus she finds contentment in trying to do kind things for Madam Regard and Celeste, such as bringing them blackberries, fresh eggs and the like, never accepting proffered coffee at their hands and, if white people chance to be at her house at the coffee hour, always serving them a marvelous brew, but mindful of the color line, always declining to partake herself while her guests are sipping theirs.

Today, in a somewhat wistful tone of voice, she said she wished I would drop by her house for coffee again some day as she remembered so pleasantly the day Celeste and I were there. I told her I would be glad to make a round shortly, and if Celeste were busy, I would come by myself which seemed to please her no end, and she offered to send for me any morning I would find it convenient, should cars not be available here at the time. Poor May, -- dying for companionship and ten times more interesting that she realizes, since she undoubtedly personifies many a dusky daughter, heiresses in their own right during the ante bellum period whose fortune was ample in all things save the color which restrained all perspective suitors save those with vast daring or contempt for racial considerations. I am so glad I have known May, for in so doing, I find so much more comprehensible the white and colored romances that blossomed so often in the ante bellum Cane River country. Schooled from infancy to disdain the negro, these daughters of the mulatto aristocracy were forever having it dinged into their ears that the white man represented the ultimate in desirability, and while the majority of them were content to secure light tinted mulattoes for husbands, the occasional one that could land a white man must have been envied by all their acquaintances, even though, I fear, the white husbands often had little or nothing to recommend themselves save their colorless pigmentation. It is possible a white girl may have ever married a mulatto man, but I never heard of it, --that was too much, but once in a great while the thing came off the other way around.

But, Lord, what a lot of speculation about the mulattoes and nothing by way of space left, save to hope your week end is a nice one.....

King Solomonly

5516

Sunday, June 15th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A quiet week end with only minor inconveniences, and one that has been all quiet, I hope, on the Lym front.

On Saturday morning I learned Celeste had taken Madam Regard to the hospital on Friday afternoon, suffering from the prevailing intestinal distemper that seems so wide spread at the moment, --about the same thing that Susie Wailles was afflicted with, I suppose. The lady doctor thought it would be simpler to have Madam Regard in town where she could look after her readily, and apparently her attention was productive of immediate results, since I found Madam Regard sitting up in a chair for her supper of milk toast when I leaped across the fence this evening about first dark.

Dr. Wenk brought the two boys for Sunday dinner and left them here for the ensuing week. It seems Sister went on to Wisconsin from Chicago and will remain until this coming week end. J. A. took the boys to town this evening which left the home front fairly quiet, and save for a few pilgrims today, --the first arrived at 7:30 this morning, quiet has obtained even at the honkey-tonk, where a baseball game, scheduled for this afternoon, was cancelled when one of the players was killed in an automobile accident.

The only other casualty I heard of at the honkey-tonk was a youth who had his skull fractured when, it is said, he toppled over after too many beers, striking the back of his head on the footrail of the bar. Spotlight is a somewhat unusual name and he is a resident of the Cohen plantation. The lady doctor was summoned at 4 this afternoon to attend the wife of Will Rogers who had a baby on Saturday and a fit on Sunday. An ambulance rushed the lady off to the hospital just before Madam Regard was discharged, and so things turn at this bend of the river which, in spite of such events, was nevertheless a peaceful Sabbath and comparatively uneventful.

I was glad to be able to stay awak for a while on

5517

Saturday night and got caught up a little on my reading. I finished Vaughn Wilkin's long novel, "Once Upon a Time", which was quite a yarn, good to excellent in sports, but petty thin in others.

I also had a go at volume 3 of Douglas Freeman's life of George Washington. This book and volume 4, dealing with doings at Mount Vernon from 1758 to 1775, gives a splendid picture of the pleasures and problems of the colonial Virginia planter of tobacco. I gather various circumstances, not the least of which was the rather unsatisfactory system of marketing the crop in England, seems to have just about provided the planter with whatever he needed to import, with no margin to pay off such investments as the purchase of negroes to produce the tobacco or to pay for the land, bought to raise the staple. If anyone made money, it would seem he did so through the speculation in undeveloped lands further to the West toward which an ever swelling tide of migration flowed. From what I have thus far explored, it would seem that under the economic conditions obtaining at the time, the making of profit from tobacco was impossible. I should like to know if present day tobacco planters fare any better, for I am under the impression that today, even as in the colonial period, it is the merchant and the Government that realizes the fat incomes on the weed, and that the grower of the stuff counts himself lucky if he breaks even on the most modest of investments.

Freeman delights me by quoting lavishly from the journals, account books, letters and publications of the period and I don't mind saying I was entranced at one clause I ran into. It was in a letter of 1760 from Martha Washington to her sister, congratulating her on the safe delivery of a baby, so earnestly "desired by you all".

Never before did I realize that good old Martha was a "you all-er" and somehow I had always thought of the phrase as something out of the latter part of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries rather than the 18th. But there it stands, slap from the pen of the wife of the man who was "the Father of His Country", which certainly seems to lend weight to its useage, even though one must admit that while Mr. and Mrs. George Washington both possessed unusual virtues, excellence of English was not one of them.

In response to my air mail to the Copyright Office on May 31st I received an air mail response on June 14th, which arrived too late for use. On Saturday night I heard a portion of the Eisenhower Detroit speech and was disappointed in it, feeling it converted few listeners and disappointed others by the straddle that characterized several points. Ed. Morrow the other night quoted somebody as saying that sometimes hard questions require hard answers which Detroit

5518

Forgot to remark La Mabry is to attend the Republican National Convention in Chicago, which, as far as I am concerned, she can have.

La Mabry
Monday, June 16th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday letter in this morning's post.

It is tucked away in the armoire, for unending interruptions prevented me from quite completing it, although I did finish the first page and was enchanted to get you as far afield as Pleasantville beside the brook, with the table going up and the chairs properly placed for a bit of food and beverage. The fact that you could get this little sniff of ozone in the open and be with companionable people is heartening, and although I accepted with poor grace the enforced delay in reading the balance of your letter, I am nevertheless filled with satisfaction to know that you really did get out for a look at green grass, gardens and large segments of sky, unframed by steel and concrete.

The doings of the telegram and the Simon Bolivar agenda all seems so odd and confusing, and I shall be holding the thought that the balance of the season may not be cluttered up with too frequent appearances from representatives of the land of one Simon Bolivar.

Naturally I'm sorry to learn "The King and I" was all sold out, but I shall continue holding the thought that the last minute may see an unexpected break in the aisle at just the moment you make your appearance at the ticket office. I suppose the same night will be a busy one up and down the road at this bend of the river, as that is the eve of the locally popular 19th of June celebration, and every mother's son and daughter will begin their fêle at sun down on Wednesday and probably some of them will still be carrying on when dawn of the 20th reddens the Eastern sky.

Following a pattern which makes no sense, a quiet Sunday was followed by a hurly-burly Monday in the pilgrim section, and most of those passing this way were notable for their dumbness. I did get a vague interlude of merriment out of La Mabry, or however she spells her name. She brought her sister with her and came to Yucca to inquire if a tour might be in order. It wouldn't, but she could bring her sister to say Howdy, what with the clock pointing

5519

to 2 in the afternoon, and the sun boiling away at 100. They really aren't so silly, the two of them together, as la Mabry is when not shackled by a member of her family. It seems she has contacted some famous eye specialist and he has told her he would see me when he comes to Oxford, Miss., on a vacation sometime if we can make dates of mutual convenience. It is kind of the bag to go to the trouble and guarantees to drive me yonder, or to John Hopkins, if that is desired, but it is all so useless.

Both ladies confessed to me that they are Christian Scientists, and both seemed vastly puzzled that I should have the Mary Baker Eddy opus and seemed acquainted with its contents, although not a member of their Church. I told them frankly I thought two of the most remarkable women New England produced in the 19th century were Mary Baker Eddy and Lydia Pinkham, and that I thought it a great pity for the mutual benefit of both bags that they couldn't have joined forces when they would have accomplished miracles with Miss Pinkham to roll the pills and Miss Eddy to beat the drum. My impulse was to tell them that I thought God made asperin, as I had explained to little Miss Alberta, just so we wouldn't have to bother him with all our little aches and pains, but I was afraid that might disturb their fervor, and naturally I don't believe in anything like that.

The missionary, the Reverend West, who must be facing an uphill job in Cloutierville, passed this way at some reasonable time between the arrival of a secretary and the striking of the supper bell. I feel sorry for the poor guy and accordingly squeezed in a little tour for his niece and for a Baptist Reverend and wife from the piney woods section of North Mississippi. It pleased the Reverend Webb, and didn't hurt the dumb bunnies he was trying to entertain, but the whole business was of short duration. There was something a little pitiful about it when the Reverend Webb, who obviously has done quit a bit of reading, remarked to me that during a recent jaunt in Mississippi, he had driven by the Faulkner place, whereupon the wife of the preacher chimed up that she, too, had once visited that little old town that sounded like Faulkner but she thought it was in Alabama, not Mississippi. The Rev. Webb glanced sidewise at me, and I smiled and agreed with the lady that she might be right about the State, famous for its towns of unexpected names, and all went along merrily.

In regard to your observations regarding Carolyn and the fact that she didn't get here before getting to Stockholm and the hope that she may make it in September, --my own impressions coincide precisely with your own. And if she makes it in September, that will be wonderful, and if she doesn't make it before next June, that will be no surprise. She's pleasant to work with, but one can count on her not at all and if one can make progress in that way, alright, and if not, then one might loose his mind on the wild assumption that anything could be done about it. It was so nice

Effie Holloway

5520

Tuesday, June 17th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice, having the balance of your letter to explore this evening, and to know your Sunday outing was such a success. Getting back home well after dark indicates that your stay ran well into twilight before starting back, and that is such a restful hour anywhere but particularly in the country, and I rejoice that you could experience such a rural frolic.

While I think of it, I might mention I am sending along a small box of no importance in this same mail, containing some sweet stuff that may somehow fit into your desk for occasional reference. I took the opportunity to enclose a pamphlet sent a week or so ago by la Storm, concerning the Palomar observatory which la Storm took the trouble to send along, I reckon, because I had mentioned my interest in how things panned out for the "great eye" which Corning Glass fabricated a dozen or fifteen years ago. The California sweets are from her, too, and the New Orleans ones from some passing pilgrim whose identity I have forgotten. I took the opportunity to drop the Christmas card of Senator and Mrs. Long, mentioned at the holiday season, but misplaced until today. It is of no importance and don't bother about saving it, for I merely wanted you to notice the quotation, remarked upon before, beginning with the word spelled in the same fashion as the Senator's.

I was interested in your observations regarding the two contesting candidates for the Republican nomination. J. A. was very talky at supper. He is beginning to like the General, which seems or would have seemed odd, if he had not said that he very much doubts if Senator Taft, if nominated, could get himself elected. He didn't have any Democrats he thought big enough to carry the election and that Truman didn't have a chance, but I opined that if the Republicans nominated Taft, I believe Truman could beat him.

I feel rather sorry for J. A. these days, for again I believe he is having to carry a lot of things on his mind,

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just as he always has had to do since taking over the place when he was 20, and somehow it always seems unfair for a youth of such tender years to have to bring up somebody else's family, even though that family doesn't chance to be your brothers and sister. Eugene tells me that Dan is on a drunk, not having appeared at his office in three days, and that the marriage of a few weeks back seems to be already headed for the rocks, and that while Dan has told his wife to get out of the house, she hasn't followed his orders. I suppose there will be further scandal before this phase of the current marital wrinkle has been smoothed out or further torn asunder. Off hand, I should say the best about "elrose" that will be remembered will center around such an odd assortment of names as Marie Therese, the Madam, Lyle, J. H., and the General With Louis "etoyer, Jr., tossed in for good measure. Curious, indeed, with such a setting and such a heritage so few other names should appear on such a list.

A tent show is operating this week at the local honkey-tonk, and every night the tent will be "wedged out" by the simple souls at the close of day when the hoes have been cast aside and the tractors put to bed, for no matter how often the same program is put on, the first night customers never tire of going again and again until the entertainment picks up its traps and moves on up the road. Junior "ugabou" was perfectly entrance in telling me how wonderful it all was and how surprised when the slight of hand artist got him to cackle a little whereupon it was apparant that without much struggle, said Junior Fugabou had produced an egg slap, like that, but he himself could explain how he had done it, but there it was right in the man's hand. Such entertainment and the old fashion "horse operas" are always a source of delight to the field hands and in view of the entertainment thus afforded, there seems to be little or no blood letting, head cracking and so on. Thursday night, being the 19th, three different honeky tonks will bring in orchestras from Shreveport, New Orleans and Baton Rouge, and it will be Hoe-ray, boys, for one night, and Saturday will probably convert the honkey-tonks into all the solemnity and quiet of a morgue. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights all packed up for leger-de-main, Thursday night a general swing-out, Friday night getting over Thursday night, and Saturday a convulsive quiet with Sunday everyone broke and praying for Monday so the old routine can be resumed once more until "Se-say-shun" time in August.

The enclosure will amuse you I shall not tell the lady, in making my response, that intuitively sensed her husband was jealous of me, which was natural, since he is a quarter of a century older than his wife and I, but why the gentleman from California who has never seen or known me, save through her account, should be disgruntled, I can't imagine, and less....

5522

Wednesday, June 18th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The weather remains hot, although an occasional breeze tempers the humidity from time to time. I have accepted your admonition about too much exertion during the full heat of the day and am devoting myself to the more strenuous chores early and late, with piddling reserved for the span between 11 and 4.

A cold mass of air, or perhaps a mass of cold air would be better, was heading this way from the Canadian border a couple of days back, but it stalled on the Texas-Oklahoma line, and shifted Eastward, so the Northeast got rain and we got baked.

The lessers in orders in these parts do so well in listening to boogey-woogey and not paying attention to news casts these days of the meeting of the new Louisiana Legislature, for if some of the people knew what kind of bills are being reported, they would really be distressed. For example, in pending legislation stlanted at Welfare administration, one bill proposes removing out of wedlock children from the relief rolls, while another proposes that any lady currently drawing money for her out of wedlock children will be automatically removed from such assistance if and when she begets another such offspring. This whole business somehow seems to require a Solomon to give an humain decision, for while it is perfectly manifest that fiancial protection should be accorded children, legitimate or otherwise, it is perfectly true that a surprising number of unmarried ladies during recent years have gone at the business of stirring up a flock of fatherless children because the Welfare Department has been paying \$25.00 per month per child to their mothers, and thus ladies who have stirred up half a dozen such are making out very comfortably and, it is said, mighty few of them are inclined to be-stir themselves much either in looking after their own children or lending a hand in any line of endeavor, saving making use of the same method to increase their incomes further.

I know of one gentleman who made a verbal understanding with three ladies, offering to sire children for them a 9 month intervals, if they, in return, would give him a percentage of the monthly checks ensuing after the birth of each child. I have

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heard of strange rackets in my time, but I guess that probably approaches the unique more than any other. One such gentleman even went so far as to have a lady taken to Court for breach of contract, but the Judge thought there was no cause for action and threw the case out.

Quite seriously the cook complains with bitterness that her age prevents her from having more children, for she is drawing only fifty dollars a month from the Welfare Department.

The people referred to above are of color, but the whites in extracting Government money are on just as immoral a level in my estimation, as for example, Dan with an income of thousands yearly, drawing a Veteran's compensation because he broke an arm while on a frolic when on leave 7 years ago. If Louisiana finally gets its relief rolls properly adjusted, perhaps the Federal Government would do well to go into their Veteran hand outs.

On the home front, J. H. drove Celine Roy, Celeste's sister, here since Sunday, to Alexandria, whence she catches a bus for South Louisiana. I guess they left at noon, and I guess the boss will be back before tomorrow dawn. I must make a note to speak with him about not absenting himself on the night of June 18th after this, for Eugene wouldn't give any of the field hands any money against their Saturday night weekly settling, and for some reason, quite beyond the powers of my imagination, 8 or 10 of them appeared on my gallery at close of day, apparently under the impression that I guard the Henry money bags during the absence of the boss. What with the tent show going on full blast at the honkey tonk tonight, and all the carryings-on scheduled for the morrow, I reckon they all could readily use a little hard cash alright. Beau Mack came a little later, saying he and Juanita wanted to go to the show and could I help them. I told Beau I hadn't seen Y. C. since Sunday, and what was I to do for a replacement. He said his daughter could read better than Y. C. and that if I wished, he would bring her to see me on the morrow. I suggested Friday, since Thursday will be everybody's swing-out in the colored section. Beau told me Y. C. would be back for cotton picking and school, and I didn't tell Beau that Y. C. told me he wouldn't. In the mean time perhaps the girl will lend a hand fully as efficiently as did her brother, and if so, a major problem will be solved.

It was so warm last night, and I seemed so wide awake, I fortified myself with some nice cold butter milk and read many a page of the life of Washington, and liked all that I read, covering the 1767 - 1769 years, which must have been among Washington's happiest. I sometimes think a school history text book might well insert a single page from a well written biography at the appropriate place when historical personages are being studied, so the student can get a glimpse, and thus an impulse to explore the broader source materials further.....

5524

Sarah Jones 6/17
Dora 6/14

Thursday, June 19th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The holiday has been profound, with not a lick being done on the plantation, but much racket from the baseball arena up the road during the afternoon, and the raucous strains of boogie-woogie noises from the same direction tonight.

Today's weather has been unusual. The thermometer stood at 84 at 6 o'clock this morning. The weather station reported the humidity at 99. A cloud coverage during the afternoon intensified the humidity and the thermometer was a little over 100.

But the mud walls of Yucca tended to keep things pleasant indoors, and I made the most of the situation to give Grandpere a bath, --the first he had had in about 20 years, I imagine. I used soap suds, applying them with a soft cloth, and it was wonderful to see how much dust and how many layers of smoke soot came off. Now the portrait looks as fresh as a daisy, as new as to that of his wife, daughter and son, all of whom got a going-over, what with the success attendant upon Grandpere. The Knipmeyers came before I had finished and Adam Knipmeyer gave me a hand. One always seems so rewarded in such undertakings if something more than subtle results are forth-coming, and in Grandpere's case, the portrait fairly glistens.

Of course the plantation, so far as work is concerned, was at a standstill all day. But in spite of the heat, the baseball game must have been a huge success, for sounds of applause and cheers came from the direction of the honkey-tonk during the afternoon, and tonight there is a vast stirring of sound waves from the same direction, bearing strange noises made by some boogie-woogie band. Perhaps I mentioned the thermometer stood at 84 at 6 this morning. I reckon it is still in the 90's tonight at 9. Surely the several swing-out places must be boiling, and I haven't a doubt the road is being burned up between one honkey-tonk and another, for there is always a tendency on the part of our friends of color to fly up and down the road at break-neck speed, simply to be going from one place to another, whereas tonight there should be the added impetus of whizzing along faster to stir up a bit of breeze.

5525

Last night I followed George Washington a little further, getting him up to about 1771. By that time, he had just about completed his change over from Tobacco to Cotton, --and why I used big letters, I don't know. His wheat was being converted into flour in his own mill he had built on Mount Vernon, and his other endless activities, as plantation operator, --there were several, --his Church activities, his role of legislator at Williamsburg, his trips to the Great Dismal Swamp, into the Ohio country etc., etc., etc., were somehow nicely balanced by his energies expended in the chase, his fondness for the theatre, and his social activities, including the playing of cards at which he did not shine, --all somehow add up to a nice balance that seems unique in a person, obviously so fitted in business affairs. Never before, I think, had I read of his charities, such as his devotion to the administration of the estates of friends and neighbors, the advancing of money to less diligent planters, often in the face of their inevitable bankruptcy, attention to the estate and education of Martha's two children, and such moves, as for example, in the case of one Mr. Ramsey of Alexandria who requested a loan, probably with a view to sending his son to Princeton, to which request Washington said there was no need, since he would be glad to advance so much money per year, covering the cost of the college career, on the condition that the money would be accepted without thought of repayment and that the Ramseys would never mention the matter to anyone. Think of it, the above paragraph is pure Washington in style, oddities of spelling, strange capitalization, cumbersomeness of phraseology and all, and yet, were the sentiments to be retained and the sentence structure put into suitable English, it seems to me some such particulars should be incorporated in every text book of American history, to balance the endless emphasis on military aspects of his life which usually loom so large in such publications. As for myself, I shall always look at the portrait on the dollar bill with much more feeling, after having read this volume 3 of Freeman's biography.

In view of the quiet obtaining on the Corpus Christi front, I take it St. Augustin may be coming into proper focus. Not knowing just when Nina is hopping off for South America, it seemed to be a good idea to forward her a little bon voyage gift that could be packed in her luggage, if desired, or made use of as a mild stimulant, should she waver toward the final days before sailing. And so I sent by parcel post a bottle of fairly nice port and a deliciously lovely yellow bottle of Sauterne which had come to hand via Irma Semperlyac Willard which seem like slightly odd traveling companions on such a voyage, but perhaps they will do.....

5526

Friday, June 20th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Monday letter in this morning's post.

I am glad you had an opportunity to fiddle about at leisure while other people wore themselves out looking for a place in the mountains to collapse just long enough to gird up their loins to chase back to town.

The doings of the Bolivar descendants is beyond one's imagination, or, perhaps more precisely, reveals a complete absence of imagination on their part. I'm not sure that imagination rules the world, but in human society the absence of it makes the pleasure of personal contacts go to pot.

It was so kind of you to give me some glimpses from the handiwork of Friend Postell and Lestan, deux. I had heard of Phillipe, the Prudhomme blacksmith, but never knew before that he was insane. I had heard that when sold, his price had been entered into the Jean Baptiste Prudhomme account book as having brought twenty five cents, which vastly intrigued me, for nothing in that particular report mentioned the \$400.00 doctor bill.

I can readily understand how you had to forego the pleasure of being at the theatre on Wednesday night, with the three-ring circus awaiting you at home. I am holding the thought that before this late date you are freed of like performances and that you may have another interval of quiet just ahead.

I'm still laughing at your quotation from the Lestan journal. I had completely forgotten about the odd Christmas gift Lyle and I discovered in the otherwise vacant armoire. I had news from that old plantation house the other day, and made some notes, which I may eventually find and pass along. I must ask some passing pilgrims what the present status of Belle Grove may be. I imagine the colonnades are still standing, they are so titanic and probably built independent of the wooden, burnable material that made up the framework of the house itself.

5527

Beau Mack brought me his daughter, I believe her name is Emily, this noon, to substitute for her brother as secretary. She reads very well, and if she doesn't get the "Shreveport bug", and so flies the coop, as it were, I think I may find a lot of my problems solved.

Like her borthor, she is thin, thin, probably is about 16, but seems full grown, at least 5 feet, ten inches or so in height. Like her borthor, her skin is bug I mean black, and while the limps cover the splendid rows of white teeth, there is something about the way both brother and sister manage said lips that in speaking, they seem to make an effort to bring the lips together, which is somehow fascinating the way a doll would be fascinating, were it so contrived as to reveal the bridge work when the toy seemed to be speaking.

I regret my inability to enclose a letter from the Picayune to Mrs. Holloman, but I am forced to return it to her, along with her accompanyin note, as the Picayune asked several questions to be filled in, as did Madam Holloman's on her own hook. I am therefore reporting that the Picayune reported the Editor, Mr. Ogden, was out of the office for six weeks, but the Assistant Editor thought Mr. Ogden would want to publish the article immediately on his return, busked for some additional information, --size of plates, their coloring, if all merchandising houses were supplied throughout the State of Louisiana, etc., etc. I wrote Mrs. Holloman, telling her that frankly I couldn't imagine if the Picayune thought it would be giving excellent free advertising to retailers if merchandise they carried were thus publicized, although I told her my guess was that it as better to announce that never have any of these items been released for public sale, thus eliminating the free advertising element, since Mr. Ogden might get the impression that by publishing the article he would be giving our efforts a heap of free publicity, and I think we might better just stress the point that these items have never been released for public sale. I

also suggested that if the article needed elaboration, she might speculate on the reason why Yucca, which has housed so many creative efforts in history and literature, should again be the scene of a new medium in the presentation of historic lore.

The weather continues hot but the day has been happy enough, not only because of physical effort but because I could have such a nice two way conversation with you, and I'm so glad you don't mind if I keep writing during your vacation....

5528

Sunday, June 22nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

The excess of heat and pilgrims might well form the basis of this diatribe, but they are both old stories and indigenous to this neighborhood, and so we might as well skip them.

The enclosure from Daisey in the Dell arrived belatedly and added little to the sum total of news. I believe it was the 9th instant that she was here and that night I wrote her endless additional particulars for the Dallas News article, -- none of which seemed needed, to my way of thinking, since she had been handed a complete and what seemed to me wholly adequate article when here. From her letter, I assume this has been resting on her holding shelf ever since, which is alright, and since we may assume the Picayune article will await the return of Mr. Ogden, six weeks hence, it is just as well if the Dallas business doesn't get into print until the Picayune thing has gone into print with a view to releasing a month later.

It seems to me Mrs. Holloman was out of order in not sending me a transcript of the final draft she forwarded the Picayune. I should like to know what she wrote concerning the matter, too, for I think she inclines to think up lots of questions to ask the Picayune regarding possible different or additional points, not covered by any given article. Apparently she has never yet learned that Editors can think up enough additional things without any need on the part of contributors of articles thinking up such things for them.

As for Daisey in the Dell, I take it she likes to mull over her prospective articles long in advance of submitting them, and ends up by getting bogged down in the mass of material she conjures up. Joint effort isn't easy in any literary undertaking but seems unusually difficult when the participants are separated by distance. I could have chunked Mrs. Holloman the other day when she was here and in regard to nothing in particular said quite unexpectedly:

"You know, in looking over some of our correspondence, I discovered that several of the points you had pointed out

5529

to me in the past which I disregarded, turned out to be exactly the points that Mr. Ogden brought up later, almost as though to prove that you had been right before anything had ever been written him."

Frances Henry came to see me a half hour before dinner on Saturday. She said she and Payne had been dining in a fairly select restaurant in Alexandria a night or two before and were surprised, when looking across the room, to see Sa Majeste avec Mme. de Montespan, occupying a table with the latter's daughter. She said she had heard much buzzing in Natchitoches about the business but she had never met the lady before until the two tables were joined. She said further that Mme. de Montespan spoke of me as an old, old friend, and that many people both in Alexandria and Natchitoches had whispered the word, "Romance", as between her and me. To quote an old plantation mistress of mutual acquaintance:

"Now that takes the rag off the bush."

According to Frances, the lady talks much about her intimate acquaintance with the Cane River region and of her friendship with me, and as she inclines to parade these matters before everyone acquainted with this neighborhood, it probably ends up in convincing the uninitiated that in reality she is some secret love of mine, -- at least on the part of those who never dream that it is another gentleman living close by who is the object of her especial interest. I guess Frances about summed up the whole business when she remarked her amazement that all the Henrys seemed to prefer stupid women. Naturally, I can not restrain a laugh in my beard when I think what wealth a biographer might encounter (encounter), -- intent on a book about Lestan or Lyme, -- there would be so many people who would assure him they knew all, whereas, in reality, they were acquainted with but a single chink of light, and all of that was nothing but optical illusion.

Interruptions today knocked out the writing of "must" letters, as to Charles, Madam "aroc and so on, but I shall dash them off forthwith and then leap into a hot shower and then be-take myself to the back gallery where I want to read a couple of pages concerning G. Washington, Esquire, and then indulge in a bit of Peter Illyovitch. A slab of cherry pie is awaiting me in the ice box, along side a bumper of buttermilk, and pie and Peter Illyovitch, buttermilk on the frosted side with G. Washington, -- and you will agree with me that such a combination requires nothing save a dash of Lyme to make it the ultimate.

I do hope your week end has held some moments of relaxation and that a thermometer is behaving itself at your bend of the river...

1888

Dora 6/19
Mrs. Holmes 6/20
5530

Monday, June 23rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

I sensed exactly how you felt a while back when receiving the somewhat rumpled drawing of the Cane River country, for this morning the postman brought me an untidy thin package, folded slap in two, containing the Grandpere plate sketch.

It's all so humiliating.

But, on second glance, my ruffled feelings were smoothed somewhat when I discovered the whole thing would have to be re-done anyway, for the hearts and the cross were too large to suit my taste, for both motifs should be rather on the subtle side, I think.

Obviously poor Mina must have been racing against time for one or two other little unimportant points, at variance with my original sketch, were noted. For example, there was the somewhat arresting statement:

"Centenary of establishment of Paris, - 1853."

In view of the recent celebration of the 2,000th anniversary of the founding of Paris, the above statement seems modest enough.

There was another statement in the same column which ran:

"St. Augustin, built by Augustin and Louis Metoyer family, 1829."

In my original draft, I had written that the Church was built by "Louis and Augustin "f.m.c. - 1829". And at the very top of the page, and following an asterisk at the bottom of the page, I had stated for the artist's information that "f.m.c." stood for "free men of color", but that I preferred using the old time method of using initials only, all of which seems to make the substitution of "family" for "f.m.c." seem odd.

But the portrait itself turned out nicely, and the houses at the top and bottom of the sketch are fine, and so with the minor changes in proportion and lettering, it will come through nicely in the end.

5531

It may come as something of a surprise when you learn that this morning at coffee, I casually remarked that little Miss Lee was taking time out during the month of July, to spend the month in the mountains, either the Catskills or the Adirondacks, - the finally decision not yet having been made.

All this was inspired by something that had come to me yesterday from the grapevine when a mutual friend of Celeste's and Dee Hertzog confided to me that Dee and her daughter, Betty are planning to run up to New York for a couple of weeks in July, --sometime after the 4th, and that they wanted Celeste to go with them. I instinctively realized, of course, that such an excuse to get into the big road would be too much to resist, and so it seemed well to me this morning before the matter had been touched on by anyone across the fence that I should remark upon news from Lyme and the contemplated removal from the city during the impending month. Immediate I was let in on a secret, --that the lady, according to her own word, might be journeying Manhattan way during July, and I think she was expressing genuine regret in learning that you would probably not be in town.

Of course I leave the whole business up to you, for your tentative plans can be adjusted by your office to suit any situation, but it occurred to me you might find it just as easy to skip getting tangled up with the tourists, and the more so in view of the possibility that actually you might have other out-of-towners on your hands at the same time, and what with one circumstance and another, it might be easier to skip the rendezvous during the current visit, and so the foundation stones were laid in advance of my knowledge (supposedly) of any impending plans springing from this end of the line. At least this lie on my part offers the perfect alibi for absence, and you will of course feel perfectly free to use it or not as you see fit. Should you want to confirm, - or rather casually toss out a month of mountains, it could so easily be done by dropping a recuperation card to Madam Regard (Mrs. E. Regard); penning a line on how nice it would be if she might be found on some mountain peak when you arrive in the Adirondacks, as is being planned, for July. But of course no note is required at all, since the seed has already been adequately planted and will blossom readily enough without any extra nursing.

As regards the enclosure, let's ignore the request for a photo of the plate for a while at least. After all, I have sent the Picayune a plate, and if they want a picture for the article, they can readily enough photograph it themselves. I think we ought to skip the Grandpere one, too, photographically, since its alterations will be requisite before any such thing is considered.....

5532

re: Grandpere plate.

Tuesday, June 24th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so I decided it wouldn't be a bad idea to round up the full support of the Reverend Fathers which ought to give a maximum of push in getting the Grandpere plates rolling among the mulatto communicants of St. Augustine's, which impelled me to make an appointment with Father Callahan for 9:30 this morning.

The ex-President of Duquesne was awaiting me on his gallery and I ran through my proposition quickly, offering to withhold release of the Grandpere plate from public sale until after the annual autumn Fair which the Church puts on, and instead, letting the Church handle the sales during that week end, plus the profits of the retailer, and el padre seemed entranced over the prospect.

I shall leave the notation on the plate about the centenary of the institution being observed in 1953, although the thing will make its bow, --that is, the plate, - in the latter part of 1952. The celebration of the centenary gets under full sail in June of next year, but money isn't easy in the cotton country in June, but is dribbling about readily enough in October and November, and the appearance of Grandpere's plate at just that time ought to give it a maximum opportunity to dispose of the major number that I shall have contrived, although I shall restrict that number very narrowly so that I shall have few if any left on my hands. If any do remain, however, I shall put them on public sale, and as the quantity will be limited, they can readily be disposed of. It seems to me the item will enjoy very limited sales, except among Grandpere's descendants, but in view of possible publicity pending, it is quite possible collectors may want to get in on the deal, and if so, I can accept any orders on the basis of 6 weeks delivery, which will enable Rock Hill to turn out some more.

Frankly, I have no doubt I could dispose of all the items among my mulatto friends without any difficulty, but it is reassuring to have the guarantee of the influence of the clergy behind one in this particular enterprise, and I am at the same time glad to do something for Grandpere's Church financially, since the retail profit on the sales made by the Church in a way will represent "found money" for that institution.

5533

During our conference, held in camera, there was much social doings going on elsewhere in the Rectory, where Celeste was chatting with the other priests. Father Callahan and I joined them and I was invited to inspect the new Chapel which had been built into the Rectory a few months back. Frankly, I was curious to see it, too, because everyone seems to feel that it was the sight of Yucca's Chapel of the Blessed Martin that inspired the idea on the part of the revered fathers to rig up one of their own under their own domicile. It is a little larger than the Blessed Martin's, and while the latter's dominant note is color, the Rectory one is an absence of the same. Lacking mud walls, the Rectory one is composition siding, I suppose, and painted white. From a Church being dismantled in Alexandria, La., five windows had been obtained, two long ones, set flush with the floor, as in the Blessed Martin's, and going to the ceiling. These face the west which ought to make the room wonderfully boiling, especially in summer. Then there are three small windows over the little altar, of odd shapes, they are, with two of them a little like the upper part of the one in the Blessed Martin's, and the other a triangular sort of thing, with the three sides curving in between the points. All are of indeterminate design, the sort of thing one would find on some non-descript inexpensive vase, turned out in the gay '90's. The glass is frosted or non-transparent, and possibly opaque, with only a little swirl or two by way of an Anna Held or Sarah Bernhart swish toward the top, and so pastel as to seem part of the balance of the window. Frankly they suggest a religious institution not at all, either in coloring or design, and what with the whiteness of the room, produce a washed out characterless impression. In a way, since the Church serves mulattoes, it seems to me about the difference between the marvelously deep velvety hue of a negro and the pale, indeterminate faded cafe-au-lait of a scantily toned mulatto. Some day you will examine the place yourself and decide how unfair I am being. To paraphrase that song of Paul Robeson's in his rendition of "Swing Boat", the Blessed Martin Chapel "still suits me".

Grabbing at random for a clearer comparison, I think I can make myself even clearer thus: - the Blessed Martin Chapel is Miss Lee, both as to depth and character; the Rectory Chapel is pure Marie Antoinette, the same shallowness and transparencies. So there you are.

Two mechanics spent the day here, installing two cooling units in the new white house, - one in the boudoir, the other in the living room. A third cooling unit was installed in the master's office at the store. The mechanics were the brothers Walmsley, brothers of the bride. By chance the groom put in his first appearance since the nuptials, --at supper last night. It is said he looks terrible and is trying to figure out a plan to rid himself of whix wife and offspring. And so things turn, chapels and charlatans, and all in the day's work....

5534

Ethel H. Giv

Wednesday, June 25th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Here comes a dull letter,, so either brace yourself against boredom or better still, just play I didn't say anything.

For the day has been long and on the warm side, without a breather from sun up until after first dark, in consequence whereof the scatter-brain department is hitting on all cylinders.

If I can find it, I shall enclose a letter from Mrs. Holloman which, if memory serves since noon, when I explored it, contains nothing. A carbon of her letter to the Picayune, mentioned in her letter with the request that I return it, wasn't bad, but between her and the Picayune, the story about the plates has been just about submerged for some kind of a thing revolving about a personality instead. I have no doubt the thing they are contriving may be more readable than what I tossed off, but why they just could let the plates roll, I can't imagine. But since nobody probably ever started off such a thing on a shoe-string, it is perhaps remarkable that anything at all gets this far.

As for myself, I have reached the point described by the "adam's phrase when she wanted to indicate a person's failure to remember something or possibly the indifference that emerges after one has definitely finished with something: -

".....just as indifferent as a cow over her last year's calf".

Although hosing continues in the cotton, I drew a couple of strong arms this morning in pursuance of a request for a bit of assistance. Usually nothing on earth can hook a hoe hand before the cotton, hundreds of acres of it, has been but completely freed from grass. But long ago I learned to use impending holidays as a pry to lift brawn, what with the prospect of extra Henrys likely to be falling in at any holiday week end. And the trick worked today, although the 4th is still ten days off.

5535

In the midst of strenuous operations this afternoon, just about the time I had reached a pleasant inundation of sweat, Joseph Pierson, the Natchitoches banker, appeared among the bushes. He explained his mother, Ruth, had sent greetings, and that awaiting him in the car were Mr. and Mrs. Forester, the former being the President of the Chamber of Commerce in town. He was so anxious to have the Foresters meet me and take a gander about the place. I allowed as how I was available, deserting the plants for the people.

Mr. Forester asked me if I could give him a general idea as to where Uncle Tom's cabin reputedly stood. I told him I would show it to him on a map a little later. And so after the tour, I pushed them onto the sofa in the living room, and brought forth the sketch of the Cane River Country map. Everybody was enchanted and, almost as though I had rehearsed him, Mr. Forester said how fortunate it would be if something like that were conveniently hung in the Chamber of Commerce so that visitors could be directed to it when dropping in to inquire about the region.

Somewhat coyly, I fear, I asked him if he would care to have the replica of the map, fired into porcelain, for the office of the Chamber. He said he would be entranced. And so that just about nails down one good source of advertising for the impending item, and the best part of it is that in such a situation, the plate ought to serve for years on end for just the purpose we had in mind, --calling it to the attention of people generally and passing pilgrims in particular.

It is pleasant to report that "Adam Regard is up and about, but her recuperation isn't quite complete, for there remains that toad-like stolidity that ailing people manifest before their old time vigor and animation has been completely restored. And yet Celeste is gambling on a complete return to vim and vigor on her Mother's part before next Tuesday when the "Antiques" will be entertained by "Adam Regard. This is a rather large group of elderly women which "Adam Regard declares Celeste engineered her into before she knew what was up. These ancient ladies meet every month at the home of one or another, and the thing falls quite flat, I believe, since age never was the sole criterion of common interest, and I think "Adam Regard finds many of the oldsters decidedly on the dull and hypo-chondriacal side. My grapevine, meantime, reports nothing new on the Manhattan hejira for July, and nothing direct has been mentioned as yet, but it is nevertheless definitely in the cards, and you are as secure as you may care to be. High-ho, - and now and bath and bed.....

Sister Guy
had am charco 6/19
5536

Thursday, June 26th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A matter of no moment occurs to me which I intended mentioning some time back but somehow forgot.

A week or so ago there were some California movie executives here and with them an expert on antiques.

In the living room on the odd shaped tip-top occasional table, I keep your Christmas box of metal, the one executed in the blue and white of the Wedgewood manner, which originally contained the elegant fruit cake.

The antique expert thrilled with enthusiasm when his gaze landed on this object, and with rare consideration, asked if he might pick it up to examine it more closely as he had never seen such a splendid piece of Wedgewood. His exuberance attracted the attention of the other people present to this object, but I told him I was distressed to be forced to deny his request, as the piece had just been put in order by a mender of china, as one of the acanthus leaves had had to be replaced at a cost of considerable time and artistry, and in view of the humidity obtaining at the time, it seemed wise to admire the piece from afar without touching it.

We had just been examining the bidet which I had explained was a mulatto import of the early 1800's, and, as so frequently happens, the history of one object was confused with another, and when the people said good bye at the gate, reference was made once more to that most splendid piece of Wedgewood "which was a mulatto import of the early 1800's".

So there you are, and if that gentleman ever passes this way again and gets a opportunity to examine the cake box and discovers it to be ersatz Wedgewood, he is going to drop dead of chagrin right then and there.

The weather continues tremendously hot and we are actually experiencing drought condition, save for the heavy dews at night which seem to make up for much of the absence of rain. One easily remains all a-drie except when dropping in to the house across the fence or

5537

the office which maintain a temperature 25 or 30 degrees lower than that obtaining elsewhere.

In view of the unusual heat that is a characteristic of Louisiana at this season, I have been think much of late about the new policy of the Parish school board which has instituted a new schedule for the colored schools. Up to this year, the colored children have gone to school from November until May. Now the old custom has been done away with, and the children go from mid November until May, followed by a month's vacation during June. They go back to school from or during July and August, vacation at cotton and pecan harvesting during September and October, and they go back to school again in mid-November. This arrangement fits in very nicely with freedom for hoeing during June and cotton picking in September and August, but disregards temperatures completely. All the negro schools I know, having been built for winter occupancy, are usually provided with wood stoves or butane, with scant, if any, regard for ventilation. And since the institutions were never occupied during the full heat of summer, such considerations didn't matter. But now, with the full blast of oven heat turned out, a room "wedged out" with children, and not so much as an electric fan to stir the air any, the experience ought to be one in endurance rather than education, I should think.

And speaking of things educational, my little old scholar of way back, --Brother, - Clemence's grandson, came to see me the other evening. By now he must be 12 or 14 but doesn't seem to have grown a bit since he used to rattle off:

"The man is in the garden, hanging out clothes, and along came a blackbird and ~~six~~ snipped his nose slap off."

I can't believe that the Paris Green, consumed when he was five or six could have arrested his growth completely after all these years, but whatever the cause, the youth hasn't grown at all, and as he is the same age, I believe, or about the same age as Lee, who is over 6 feet tall at 14; I must eventually arrange to take a snap shot of the two of them together.

Madam Regard tells me the Reverend Fathers called on her last night and did much talk about their enthusiasm over the prospect of handling the Grandpere plate. Let's hope the same enthusiasm obtains when it comes time for them to start beating the drum in earnest.....

5538

Friday, June 27th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The heat continues, bringing forth its usual crop of pilgrims, including some from Dr. Rand at 2 this afternoon, and it's wonderful to what physical trials people living within the Alexandria area will go to explore the old plantation when everything is melting down and 364 other days in the year, many of them less enervating, are available for sight seeing.

But if the pilgrims can take it, I can, and besides, I am usually secretly glad they interrupt me when I am whaling away at the weeds, for I must confess it is a heap less enervating, guiding the uninitiated than contending with out of hand vegetation.

And after the last batch had gone, it was about 5 and I collapsed on a bench in the "avant cour" for a cigarette, and we impressed by the tameness of the birds assembling for afternoon tea, for the water in the big old iron pot must have been tepid if not precisely boiling. Perhaps it is the heat that makes humans and animals more quarrelsome and our feathered friends less combative, for there sitting about the rim of the cauldron all at the same time were 4 blue jays, two cardinals, one mourning dove, two cat birds and a flock of smaller fry, probably warblers whose identity I couldn't establish. I was especially entranced at the sight of the cat birds, for the ones who used to nest in the great oak, among each sunset hour redolent with their liquid music, had never sung again after the great Wenk bombardment months back, perhaps February of 1951. But now it appears a new family has established itself, not in the old oak but in the magnolia of the "avant court", and at 7:30 this evening they were pouring out their hearts with song that seemed just as melodious as anything I ever heard issuing from their European cousins, the nightingales.

The waxing moon has also inspired the mocking birds to do their best these soft, velvety nights, and I hear two of them in the white garden, making the night sweet with their music.

5539

In today's post came an odd assortment of things, including an unsealed air mail from Reno, containing a folder on the Planetarium of the Franklin Society of Philadelphia. I assume nothing else had been enclosed in the envelope which was mightily tattered.

Another item was a note from a Dallas lady who had been here a couple of weeks back. It was a bread and butter business, but included an inquiry as to the possibility of bringing a number of ladies from Dallas with her within the next month or so. She explained she had been so enchanted with her visit that she would like to share the same sensation with her friends. There is nothing unusual about that, but when I consider that Dallas is 300 miles to the Northwest and a bevy of bags seem to think nothing about making a 600 mile jaunt for a go-round at Melrose indicates that there must be something wrong with their heads or else I sometimes fail to realize how much a Melrose tour means to those who really enjoy it.

I telephoned Dr. Coombs at his college office this afternoon to inquire after the health of his family. I had heard he had recently undergone a minor operation for some malignancy on his wrist. But he said he is alright and is having a fine time in his vegetable garden where he works every day. Mrs. Coombs, he said, gets two shots every day for some nerve thing, having to do with the ruptured whatever that got knocked out of line, -- is guess in the spinal column, last year. Her doctors think some injections, over a period of a year or so may obviate the necessity for taking the backbone apart and putting it together again. He said her sister was in the hospital, having fallen into a hole in the street in Alexandria, and that her mother was on the mend, following the blowing off of her kitchen gas stove which sprayed the poor old lady with boiling grease and set fire to the kitchen. Fortunately the prompt arrival of the fire department saved her mother's home from being wricked. I must say that family has more adventures than any I ever ran across.

A couple of engineers and electricians will labor at rigging up the new machinery in the gin over the week end, and what with the prospect of having it a "bomb" Sunday, too, I shouldn't be lonely. J. H. says he had a couple of lines from Pat, saying he would be here for two or three days on the 4th, when the Joe Henrys are expected from Texas, --after which I reckon Melrose may subside into the banalities of pilgrims and plants.....

5540

Sunday, June 29th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so the best news of the week end was moisture.

On Saturday evening about sunset, a half inch of rain fell, giving vegetation a maximum opportunity to absorb the liquid refreshments all through the night.

Today was cloudless and steaming hot, but again about sunset, an amount of rain about equal to Saturday night's came tumbling down. The effect on cotton fields, pastures and gardens will be wonderful. It will be fine for the weeds, too, I reckon.

I know not what happened to the Wenks, for I heard nothing from the direction of Cloutierville. But we had a few people for dinner, electricians and mechanics laboring on the new engines being installed in the gin. One of the electricians said he felt he knew me, although we had never met before. He is the son of Mr. Kelly who used to carry the mail, and once presented me with a pole cat, --Taffy. The youth expressed the hope he might sometime have a Melrose tour. I thought the time auspicious, and afterward, the pilgrim said the go-round meant more than I could imagine, for he was going back to Odessa, Texas shortly, where Mr. Kelly now lives, and that his father would have so much pleasure in talking about Melrose, for it seems I had once given the father a tour which, although I didn't realize it at the time, made a profound impression on his simple soul. It's pleasant, such an echo after the passage of years, to know that time thus spent on the people of seemingly small capacity for cultural assimilation, really do carry away something with them.

Along about mid afternoon, Maud Pattison appear, bringing Dr. Willis of Alexandria and a Mrs. Brown with her. We had a pleasant contact and Dr. Willis, a friend of Dr. Rand's, asked if he might come back shortly to do some color photography. And that reminded me that the photographs Dr. Rand took for me two or three years ago have never been mentioned since the day they were snapped. I wonder what happened, or if he simply forgot.

I was glad to see Mrs. Coombs for a few minutes Saturday.

0422

5541

She had had some errand down this way, but was in a "slow hurry", what with having to get home to take her daughter to the bus for Shreveport where the latter is in training as a nurse. The girl is not up to par, what with the impending operation for the removal of three wisdom teeth which require a bit of surgery.

Mrs. Coombs was delighted at the prospect of a Grandpere plate. One of Grandpere's descendants is a Coombs servant, and Mrs. Coombs said she was positive not only the servant would want more than one plate, but in mentioning them to other descendants of Grandpere in town, of which, it seems, there are many, quite a stack of the things would have to be rolled in the general direction of Natchitoches. Somehow two of these had heard of the Melrose Plantation plate and had be-sought Mrs. Coombs to discover some way of obtaining them on their behalf. She said that a couple of wives of college professors had asked her for the same favor, and she suggested that the college stationary might welcome and do exceedingly well with the Cane River Country plate when it becomes available. It seems the whole college has to go through that department to get mail, and lots of visitors to kin folks in school use the same post office, so that something in the nature of a souvenir such as the Cane River Country number might be very desirable. I think the idea good.

Maud Mattison, who hasn't been interested at all in either the Melrose Plantation or Cane River Country plates, gave me a mild surprise by asking me to let her have one of the Grandpere plates as soon as available. From the inception of the idea for this item, I have been convinced that it would sell not at all, save among mulatto kin folks of Grandpere and yet both Maud Mattison and Mrs. Coombs have asked to "get in on the ground floor". Surely these two requests mean nothing so far as indicating a trend, but I should be astonished if, in the end, Grandpere unexpectedly rolled 'way out in front.

Although summer is definitely upon us, the real "dog days" are still in the office when the honkey-tonks are scenes of bigger and better scuffles. Still, some hint of what lies ahead was manifest this afternoon when the widow Brown, (currently Mrs. Sam Peace) did a bit of carving on Madam Fugabou, both ladies having to be taken to the hospital to have a bit of sewing performed on their respective persons.

Closer to home I learn by the grapevine that impending plans for the Manhattan jaunt have been temporarily shelved because of a slight indisposition on the part of Dee's daughter, and so unwinds the beginning of another week.....

0422

Robina G.

5542

Monday, June 30th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The sun didn't shine today. Neither did it rain. But with the heat at 97 and the humidity at 99 and 44 one hundredths, it didn't require much moseying about to get the sweat glands going full tilt.

The plantation didn't work and so the Dark Duke came by this morning and we decided it was an excellent time to slap on another coat on the screen. We shall probably put on a other later in the week and then it will be completed, and mighty pretty it looks already. As to what I am going to do with the thing when it is finished, I wouldn't have the slightest idea, but it's pretty alright, and I'll find a place for it somewhere.

The cutting scuffle on yesterday at the local honkey-tonk was followed today by Madam Fugabou and associates going to town to see about having Nina Brown Peace arrested and jailed for disorderly conduct. Alphonse Metoyer who as operator of the honkey-tonk, gave his version of the doings to J. A., said that "Nina is sure an outlaw lady alright but she's good for his business since she knows how to slide up to the men folks and let them to buy whiskey".

The use of the word, "lady" is so common in these parts, that one would be astonished if one heard anything other than, say, "wash lady" or "scrub lady" or some such, but I guess this is the first time I have heard of an "outlaw lady", and, naturally I love it.

And speaking of ladies, those across the fence must be well on the mend, since they headed out for town before 7 this morning for a go at the Beauty Parlor. The younger lady went back to town again this afternoon, but the elder one remained at home and I saw her for a few minutes before supper time. She said she felt tired and wished she didn't have to entertain the "Antiques" on the morrow.

5543

For days I have been intending to thank you again for the transcription you forwarded recently, covering the letter of Father Baumgartner to the Madam, giving an historical sketch of the Church of St. Augustin. I am impressed by his statement that the Parish was established in 1845 which seems to be three years later than the Reverend Fathers now declare it to have been. It would be interesting to know which cleric was correct, although I must say I accepted the 1853 for the plate without giving the matter much thought, --any thought, in fact.

As for what kind of an historian Father Baumgartner was, I wouldn't know. Of this I am certain he loved his Parishoners, which is more than can be said of the present incumbents of his post. But I suspect he was as one with them in one respect, --his complete lack of appreciation of their historic past. Had this not been so, surely Father Baumgartner would never have countenanced the tearing down of the 1829 Church to build the new structure on the earlier foundations in 1917, and especially so, since there were 40 extra acres round about on which the new edifice could have been erected. But I recognize, of course that simply because he didn't appreciate the old Church is no sign he may not have been meticulous about his dates, but since the 1853 or the 1856 dates were or are concerned not with the Church but with the Parish, it doesn't seem to cut so much ice either way.

From the enclosure, you will get a smile out of the lady's admonition to me to tread light on any more china at the moment. It is sound council but a little on the hilarious side, too. The Clara mentioned in the letter may or may not have an explanatory clause, indicating Clara is Frank's former wife, --I have forgotten the context, but so she was.

Bill Downs or Ed. Morrow or some such tonight remarked that it would be a week from next Thursday before the balloting got to going full tilt at Chicago. It doesn't seem possible we shall have to sit through ten more days of such a lot of clap-trap and hoop-la before those gentlemen finally get things ironed out in the Windy City. With so much squabbling going on, one side or the other is going to be mighty disappointed and a heap of voters alienated, which certainly ought to help the Democrats if they can get their racket well lubricated.....

5544

Howard Williams 6/26/52
5544

Postcard from
Mrs. Brown
6/23

Tuesday, July 1st, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your long, newsy letter of Thursday in today's post. At first announcement of the news that you had simply taken off the day filled me with no end of delight, but as I progressed and discovered that you had taken a "vacation" to turn the world upside down, hang it out on the line, take it in an iron, and the Lord knows what other lines of endeavor, then I wasn't so sure that you had done well to escape the drudgery of routine labor. As for myself, I am taking your advice to go slow during these hot days, and I am hoping you may take a page from the same recommendations to do likewise.

I was at once fascinated and flabbergasted by your account of the strange harum-scarum doings of the Simon Bolivar numbers. It doesn't seem possible such "Alice au pays des merveilles" could go on in the current century. But as I frequently witness different but somewhat similar performances, the antics of your problem kin are quite within my comprehension. And was there ever such a sigh, such an expressive sigh of relief, as when, momentarily, we find ourselves free from such perpetrators.

And how well you expressed that curious, and withal slightly ridiculous interest we all, on occasion, summon up when some void demands a filler. I am thinking of the television program and how, no matter how trite the thing may have been, it suddenly became the object of vast concentration on everyone's part, with everyone secretly thankful to heaven for having thus provided something or other to fill in the blank moments, --or hours.

Today's post was one of those that usually turn up after a few days of unusual thinness. Today there was a bumper crop, much of which I haven't even opened. I am glad to say that my latest secretary, --I believe her name is Emily, reads remarkably well, and bravely waded through much today, but except for your letter, I read but sections of those which might call for immediate attention, and la Storm's, which was long and in a hand that was a little difficult for one unaccustomed to it. I shall try to run through it on the

5545

morrow, and then pass it along. A six page assortment from Mrs. Holloman contained a letter from her to me, a letter from the Picayune to her, and a transcript of a new segment of story she has just forwarded to be added to the original one. As she probably altered the original manuscript about the plates considerably, --she says in her letter to the Picayune she didn't retain a copy, and as it now appears from the duplicate, asked for by return mail, that she has dipped into unused material originally dictated for the article of a few years back, -- "Miss Cammie Still Lives at Melrose", just what the final results may be, I shudder to think. For example, there seems to be one place in which she quotes me directly as saying: "There never was any telling whom one might encounter at dinner in the big house", -- which I may have perhaps said when trying to give the impression of the variety of Miss Cammie's friends and the various lines of endeavor they represented. But taken out of its context, I can only wonder what the final impression may be like. But since the primary purpose of the article is to sell plates and not personalities, I shall not object too much if the former end is achieved, and I shall probably have to charge off the strange Holloman personality tints to unexpected costs.

One thing in la Storm's letter struck me as coincidental as things that are always happening to you and me. In writing her, it has been my custom, even as in writing you, to mention any wine that particularly struck my fancy, and the other day I reported a tawny port, bottled by the Christian Brothers in Napa, California. This letter was written after la Storm had moved on to Reno, but in her response, she goes into some detail regarding the self same organization, and indicates she has but recently visited the place. She is what Miss Cammie would style a sight.

And speaking of la Storm reminds me to say how glad I am you found the fruit and nuts from her to be alright. I laughed loud and long at your fortitude in not going into the New Orleans number at the same sitting on the grounds of avoidupoids. I suppose everyone is forever trying to fashion the rest of humanity after its own pattern, but in my case, I most certainly do when it comes to the matter of eating. I am a great believer in it, and just so long as an individual feels well, I think he should slide straight ahead in the food department, for who cares about an hour glass figure, either in gazing at one or possessing one, and I have always felt a little extra poundage is a wonderful insurance against times when non-digestive ailments tend to eat up one's reserve strength. So much to talk about and so much desire to share a bit of that Tender Leaf tea, but I must fold for now, after thanking you for such a happy day.....

5546

la Storm
Cp

Wednesday, July 2nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

The weather continues....

I dropped by to say Howdy to Adam Regard this afternoon about 5, and what with my garden activities, although at reduced speed making the 100 degree temperature seem much higher than that, I nearly froze when I made my bow next door and was presented with a large bowl of ice cream, drowned in frozen strawberries. Celeste was in town, and Madam Regard and I had ample opportunity to cover a lot of unfinished business. But the most astonishing thing the lady opined was:

"It's so much cooler today, isn't it."

and the answer was but definitely No.

Celeste must have had quite a harrowing morning, for flanked by only three servants, she undertook supervising a going over of the big house in anticipation of impending company and that is a chore that inevitably upsets the applecart.

As for myself, I had a single servant for six houses and a few acres of garden thrown in for good measure, and so my problem wasn't nearly so great, so far as making people jump crooked.

I sometimes laugh to myself at the master's concept of what labor is involved in keeping an establishment such as the six houses and gardens in order. Yesterday morning, for example, he asked me if one servant for a half day wouldn't be adequate. I guess he was yearning to put said servant into the field with the other hoe hands. But by noon I had contrived sufficient tangle to require further assistance, and as the master won eleven hundred golden schmackers at the gaming table in the afternoon, he seemed positively expansive by the time another night had passed.

From his mother-in-law, I learned he saw his suddenly acquired niece yesterday and raved over her beauty more than he had ever been known to remark on anyone before. It will be interesting to see if she is trotted out here for the 4th.

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In yesterday's memo, I didn't get around to thank you for passing along the crux of the Palomar Observatory story, and I am glad to have it, as I shall want to refer to it when next I take Underwood in hand to write La Storm. I got around to explore her letter today, and am enclosing it herewith. Going for a swim at 80, as she casually mentioned in her letter, is really something to contemplate. Surely she is a remarkable individual and I wonder at her vitality. There is something about her energy that reminds me of the Madam's and how once remarked to her how happy he would be when she got to be 90 and so would not generate energy enough for for more than three or four people instead of sufficient for ten in her usual state.

The sudden gusts of wind in Saturday's and Sunday's rains were of that curious course, seeming to blow slap down from on high rather than paralleling the surface of the earth, and the net result was that lots of plants look as though some mighty hand and forced them slap toward the ground. A lot of things could be straightened up, some of the things would straighten up by themselves, and enough plants were so flattened they had to be cut down, what with their main stalks being completely broken. The bananas along the front gallery suffered very slightly but there were a few big leaves which were snapped off and had to be removed. In snipping off a couple of such, I discovered that the big old blossoms on the Orinocos are putting out, --impressive items suggesting fat spear heads coming to a sharp point, and the whole bud about the size of two hands cupped together. The winter was so mild, I anticipated a large crop this year but the early November frost wrought havoc with this year's prospects, and I am grateful that there will be any at all. Oddly enough the Arenbourg ones, in a more exposed position than the Yucca ones, seem to promise a better yield, so that by the time autumn is upon us, the Chapel of the Blessed Martin ought to be quite gay with emerald-green bunches of bananas suspended from the rafters like huge exotic chandeliers.

I must get off an air mail letter to Rock Hill on the morrow, for it only came to my mind today that I probably didn't make it too clear on the Grandpere plate that the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Parish was concerned exclusively with the Parish of St. Augustin and not with Natchitoches Parish. Until this thought struck me, I had never thought about the presence of political and religious Parishes, several of the latter within the confines of the former, --a circumstance which, of course, could happen only in Louisiana, since this is the only State having the political divisions styled as Parishes. Well, so things go, and I must fold for now and may your vacation be a thumping success.....

6182

5548

Thursday, July 3rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

The thermometer continues to "hoover around 100, but last night it touched a low of 78 which somehow seemed quite frigid just before dawn. I continue to mosey about at slow motion speed and thus far the heat really hasn't bothered me at all.

I had expected no servants today but drew two, and so was fairly busy until 11 when the pilgrim patter began to emerge.

Earlier in the morning I learned J. A. had sent some movie people to see me, but I never did see them or perhaps they thought the big house was the only structure to excite their interest. I did see them trapping out of the front gate an hour later, but I didn't deter them in their flight and whence they came or when and whom they represented, I haven't the vaguest idea. I understand J. H. talked with them earlier in the day in town, but I never did see him, and am thankful I eluded that business.

At 11 the Sondahls of Shreveport arrived, -- Mr. and Mrs. and Miss, along with a young lady from St. Louis. They are old friends and know the place pretty well, as Mr. S. did some restoration work here at one time or another. But they hadn't chanced to be down this way since along about 1942 or 1943, and so they had many a new twist to inspect. It was Mr. S. who restored Beaufort, and I believe he is considered one of Shreveport's more successful architects.

They are charming people and I asked them to hurry with the tour, for, as I explained, the dinner bell would soon be sounding and I wasn't dreaming of inviting them to dinner, what with the lateness of the hour making it unlikely the cook would have much luck in adding water to the soup.

We timed the tour neatly but just as we reached

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the front gate, five minutes after the bell had rung, it was noticed their car had a flat. It was fortunate that the garage wasn't too far distant, but it took the experts about an hour to chance the flat, and my "soup" was accordingly delayed considerably.

My little old lady secretary was late in arriving, -- usually she makes it at 12:30, but today it was 4, and I smiled to myself when she asked, on departing:

"Do I have to come tomorrow, and the reason I ask is because there's a frolic up the road."

I told her she didn't, for I figured I still would have Lee and Junior Fugabou as stop-gaps, and they are likely to show up, frolic or no frolic.

The Joe Henrys were expected tonight, but they arrived at one o'clock noon instead, and it is always a pleasure to see them. Both sets of S. G.'s will arrive from Baton Rouge tomorrow (the 4th) in the afternoon and remain until dinner on the 5th. The Juniors will occupy J. h.'s and Celeste's section of the domain.

The helplessness of Junior is underlined by the fact that the 20 hour visit is carefully timed so that only three eliminations of urine will be necessary during his absence and it is understood that other matters reserved for the sanctity of the private bath room may be by-passed during the interim of their absence from their own home. What a pitiful situation and how wearing it must be not only for the patient but for those nearest and dearest.

A letter from Rock Hill, which, as I understand it, is really Rock Hall, indicates the Grandpere plate will be executed and forwarded prior to September 15th, -- a magical date I specified, for I believe the St. Augustin Fair takes place in October, and I wanted to be sure the merchandise was to hand well in advance to the dead line. I take it Father Callahan must have mentioned the impending plate to someone on the Joyous Coast recently, for today two residents of that section telephoned me to inquire when the item would be available. As these people are not in the intellectual brackets and I imagine rather unsympathetic to anything in the color department, I was a little surprised at the inquiry. Perhaps they were making the request for information in behalf of servants, and yet they are scarcely the kind who would be that considerate. O

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D.D. 7/

5550

Friday, July 4th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your five o'clock letter of Monday in today's post.

Receiving mail on holidays, although an old story at this bend of the river, is, nevertheless forever a mild surprise to which I never get quite accustomed. And today it was doubly so, because I had anticipated nothing from the direction of Lyme, assuming your social calendar was pretty well clogged during and perhaps following the week end.

But thank heavens that week end is over and how pleasant it is to contemplate your little sojourn in the Catskills where I hope you encounter no end of ozone, coolness and gods of sound sleep. I laughed to myself at how soon the mountain trek became a reality after I had charted the plans, all unknown to anybody.

Locally the weather remains unchanged and while the program was about as usual for a holiday, the pilgrims weren't so numerous as I had expected.

This morning a couple of fine gentlemen from Dallas telephoned from town, explaining they were acquaintances of Rudolph, and asking if the might drop in to see me and Melrose. They could. Before I had gone with the post, the grapevine advised me they had already had arrived and were chatting with Joe in the store. It turned out that one of the men recognized Joe, whose name he had never known, as being in a group with him in the Army (for) a week, 7 years ago, studying chemical warfare. He certainly must have a wonderful memory and of course Joe was glad the man made himself known. Odd that the man who had heard Rudolph speak of Melrose so often, had never known the name of his military associate and so never connected him with Louisiana.

My guests remained until after 11, and at dinner, Juanita spoke of having spent the morning with Celeste down at Mayor Keyes camp, down Magnolia way on the opposite bank to the river, and she brought me a message from the Mayor, asking if he might stop in this week end sometime. He could.

5551

I was glad to see Dr. Rand this afternoon. He and the boys were at the camp but Blythe didn't come. Something other than her mother's imperfect health must be biting her.

A servant brought news that the Senior and Junior S. G.'s had arrived and were across the fence, so Dr. Rand and I went over there for a little visit. Junior seemed fine, and the gaiest member of the group with his wife, Barbara, a close second. J. A. had had a ramp built up his front steps, and so Junior can fly about, inside and out, like a breeze, especially as he operates his rolling chair with seeming easy and pleasure.

We all dined, save Madam Regard, at the big house, and as I drew a place between J. A. and Barbara, found the conversation went along nicely with the fried chicken, potato salade and so on.

The table ran thus: - J. A., Joe, Celeste, the General, Pannie, Frances, Juanita, Madam General, Junior, Barbara and myself. From this, you will note the absence of two members of the family. Three times a telephone invitation to Dan brought a refusal to attend, and a call to Shreveport last night elicited a like negative from Sister, - although the reasons for declining were probably scarcely the same.

In today's post came a note from Daisey in the D11, along with an article which I Okayed and returned forthwith. The article isn't any good, and I shall be astonished if it ever sees print. Well might she have improved on my efforts, but somehow she felt impelled to inject so much Texas material and before one is half through with the piece, one has forgotten the subject. I believe the manuscript she mentioned in her last letter, as getting ready to forward to Mr. Scott was the one she had stirred up some time back, - a detective story or some such, and come to think of it, perhaps that is why she hasn't been sleeping well lately--too much blood and thunder, possibly.

As for the errors in the manuscript or the News article, I didn't think they mattered at all, since the article wasn't any good to begin with and probably will never see print. And even though it may, it is doubtful if anyone will read more than the first sentence, so all succeeding errors won't register anyway. Apparently the girl isn't up to par or some such, and I thought it pointless to take the thing apart and expect her either to "see the light" or even want to make the corrections, and I just said fine and let it whiz. Now I'll whizz into my tub, and thence to my downy couch....

5552

Sunday, July 6th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter in Saturday's post. I am sorry to say the postman was so much ahead of time that he had already departed before 9 o'clock when I passed that way.

And may I tell you how kind I think you are to have marched over to 42nd Street. It was so thoughtful of you and as soon as the glossy arrives, I shall put one in the mail for the Picayune, via, Holloman, immediately. The two glossies will be ample for current plans, but it is nice to know a film exists so it will be to hand whenever we have occasion to draw on it.

I hope your jaunt to the mountains wasn't too enervating and that right now you are luxuriating in gobs of rest. Saturday morning at this bend of the river was razzle-dazzle. Madam General at breakfast announced she thought something by way of twenty five thousand dollars should be expended on "elrose immediately to 'make it a show place', and if not, then it should be closed up tight. She said that in a round about way news had come to her that some pilgrims had remarked the house wasn't in good repair and that it was humiliating to know people should find it so. Of course she hasn't any intellectual comprehension of what the place is all about and I reckon her type of friends want nothing so much to see as a great big Stanton Hall, all a-glimmer and a-glow with ten coats of varnish.

Joe Henry was supervising some repair work and somehow he got into a tiff with the lady and there was a general gloom over conversation from then until Baton Rouge and Conroe departed slap after dinner.

I gave Barbara a little tour in the early morning and found her a pleasant child with as great aspiration and appreciation of the local set up as her mother-in-law. Later the Senior and Junior S. G.'s came to visit me and make a tour of the gardens. The wheel chair moved along like a breeze, in spite of the grass and soft spots of ground where the hoes had been running.

I think everyone at this place felt relaxed when

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we were comparatively alone again. A large package was left at J. H. S. by the Baton Rouge contingent, saying it was a wedding-present for the brother who never came out from town.

Shortly after quiet had been restored, Friend Postell came to spend the afternoon. He had just returned from Lake Placid and had much to tell me about the Hudson Valley. His family is on the joyous coast but he must leave them to chase somewhere but hopes to return in a week or so. He told me Dr. Mattas who lost one eye years ago, has had an operation for cataract on the other, and it was not a success. Now in his 90's, Dr. Mattas has recently made a will leaving his tons of papers and from a hundred and seventy-five to five hundred thousand dollars to the Howard-Tilden Library, -perhaps the medical section, - he wasn't sure.

I saw Madam R. this afternoon and gave her your message. She seemed so pleased to be remembered. She seems to have stood the week end very nicely and said everyone had fun playing cards last night. I said I assumed the gentlemen talked politics some, but she said the General read the paper while the others were playing cards, as J. H. S. on taking Aurelia home after supper, discovered that many circuits of electricity serving other sections of the neighborhood were without lights and as President of Valley Electric, he had to spend some time giving the matter his attention, before returning home, and that he had to go out two or three times later during the evening. The clerk had already told me that Mme. de Montespan was reported at a camp just below the spillway. I was reminded of some faulty transformers in this neighborhood during the war into which the cardinals were forever getting into, with a view to making a nest, I suppose, and every time they explored one of the electrical boxes, the whole system would be completely blown out. Last night there must have been a series of birds in the box.

I must remark on a point you brought up in your next letter to the last letter. I was amazed that you had remembered about the Phillipine lilies, planted beyond the stained glass window of the Chapel. How remarkable you are. and as for the lilies, they are doing just fine, the entire circle, having attained a height of from 2 to 3 feet, and will have doubled that height within the next ten days or so, when an explosion of white trumpets at the top of each stalk will proclaim the glory of God in a variety of colors as one opens the Chapel door and catches sight of them through the reds, blues and amethysts of the glass beyond which they are flourishing. How wonderful are they and Lyme....

5554

N. B.
2222 clipping mislaid, will send later.

Monday, July 7th, 1952.

Memorandum: It's a rare and somewhat dubious accomplishment when, as a person or political party can somehow succeed in over-shadowing itself. But that is the first impression I have in listening to the MacArthur keynote speech in Chicago.

Like 150,000,000 other people in the country, I had been looking forward to the speech, in view of all the hoop-la and drum beating about its scheduled appearance. But the scuffle within the convention itself during the day kept the lime light focused on the inter-party brawl, although the long heralded speech didn't come off until hours after the scuffle had been momentarily ended, giving prospective listeners an opportunity to forget the battle of the delegates and prepare their minds for the great pronouncement by the Waldorf Llama. But while old soldiers may fade away, the vivid memory of the recent knock-down over rules on the floor didn't and it would take a mighty good speech to re-capture the listener's interest, -and such a speech, it turned out, was not forthcoming.

The purpose of a keynote speech, I suppose, is dual in purpose, - first to elevate the party in convention, and second, to level or sink the opposition party not in convention. This may be accomplished either by sounding an emotional claxon call to party members and the marginal voters whose ballots will determine the November election, or by an alternative method, wherein the keynoter simply denounces everything and especially the manifest shortcomings of the party of the opposition.

MacArthur selected the latter course but neglected to make use of the most devastating materials available and denied himself the major effects of those things used by couching his message in such long sentences, too many words but vaguely comprehended by large segments of his radio audience and by going too far afield, as is calling the Democratic Party a war party which convinced no one, so that both his personal and political purposes, whatever they may have been, were advanced not at all.

5555

One manifest weakness of the Old Guard, as typified by MacArthur and Taft, is their absence of a sense of humor. Perhaps the Old Guard never listened or read the Roosevelt speech about Falla getting lost in Alaska, which they might well have studied in preparing the keynote address. And particularly is this applicable in view of the tenseness of proceedings at Chicago only a few hours prior to the MacArthur appearance before the microphones. Of course nobody probably could have anticipated the doings of the day very far in advance, but even so, there were several hours of interim between the close of the convention's business and the beginning of the speech, and the whole thing should have been worked over to eliminate the two-ton words and phrases and light and ironic lines put in their places.

Off hand I should say the truth would have been as well served and as much political advancement attained if some such sentence as this would have been tossed on to the air waves:

"I come to consider with you such matters as mutual cooperation and not mink coats" or "The Republican Party stands for a vigorous, all-out prosecution of the Korean warleaving it to others to threaten punching the nose of a music critic".

Such lines, of course, would have instantly been styled flippant by the opposition but that seems to be exactly what the Old Guard lacks and F. D. R. certainly demonstrated that in political turmoil a single laugh may cut as much ice as a mountain of ponderous half truths and denunciations.

Well, so much for first impressions of a speech which, as it turns out, ended up in a fizzle and the bigger fool am I to be giving it so much consideration.

On the home front, the first big red leather-like petal of the rhinoceros blossom dropped to the ground, thereby initiating the inception of this year's banana crop, as the fruit begins forming at the point each petal breaks off.

I hope Emily, - pronounced Emma-lee, isn't down with the prevailing virus difficulty which has kept her papa in bed during the past week. Perhaps she went back to Shreveport with her brother on Sunday. Be that as it may, there was no mail of interest and so Lee could manage nothing easily enough. The enclosure, - printed, must represent personal property and not real estate, as 823 Royal is worth between 30 and 40 thousand dollars. Do hope you had an opportunity to do a bit of radio-ing...

y.c.

5556

Tuesday, July 8th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Thursday note in this morning's post, along with two larger photographic envelopes, the one from you, the other from Rock Hall. Oddly enough the Rock Hall one came perfectly flat while yours came perfectly folded in two. I hasten to report, however, that in spite of the folding so that the extreme ends touched, the glossy surface wasn't broken, by some miracle, and so in the same out-going mail I sent along one of the copies, so it may reach the Picayune promptly.

I must congratulate you on the excellence of the photographic work, for it is certainly splendid and I see no reason why the Picayune reproduction shouldn't be equally so, what with such a splendid original to work on.

It was so kind of you to take time out to dash off a little line from the Post Office just before you dashed up town to make preparations for your departure. By now your little outing will have just about run out and you will be thinking about heading back for town. I do hope with all my heart that the weather and all attendant circumstances have been most favorable and your flight into the greenery has done you oceans of good.

As the enclosure indicates, the photo being returned by Rock Hall was of Grandpere, even though the letter says Louis. I, for what reason I know not, am particularly glad the final sketch is being mailed directly by the artist, but I have a feeling that sometime we are going to need that artist's address. I shall send it along when it comes to hand with the request that if convenient, it be kept on file so just in case we ever have occasion to use it, it will be readily to hand.

Locally the heat continues but we are promised a dab of coolness tonight in the wake of "widely scattered thunder storms".

I don't need any thunder storms but if they would like to scatter a bit of rain around this neighborhood, I would approve. But I seem to be thriving on the heat and now and then grab off an icicle in the office or across the fence. This

5557

morning when telephoning in the office, the clerk came in to whisper that there were a couple of ladies outside to see me. I finished my call and went out, passing the ladies, and on to the front of the store to see about the mail before getting bogged down with pilgrims. As the clerk handed me the mail he whispered again that he had just learned the ladies had come to see J. H. and not me, and so the ladies went their way and I mine without any of us exchanging howdies. This afternoon along about 4, Charles Cunningham of the Natchitoches Times telephoned me to inquire if I knew anything about St. Denis' son-in-law. I told him I knew a little. He said there were some ladies in his office from the University of Texas at Austin, who had been to Melrose this morning to see J. H., but not finding him here had followed to town and waited all morning for him at some office or other, - R. E. A., probably, and only at the moment before he had made the telephone to me did Charles tell them that they might learn more about de Meziere from me than from J. H. What a hurly-burly. And so I invited said ladies to make another pull up and down Cane River on the morrow when I shall receive them in the morning and try to toss them some of the stuff for which they are spending their days flying about.

I regret to report that my reading machine is getting a bit faint which probably means the tubes are about to die, but I can always send it in to town and I know Madam Coombs will be glad to take it under her wing, even though her Welfare administration at present has nothing officially to do with this region. I am reading a sleep-inducing volume by Dr. Martin Gumpert, -- "Anatomy of Happiness", a McGraw-Hill publication. I like it because it talks about medicine and the human ill's generally, and the relation of a happy frame of mind to the latter, --and all in a language sufficiently simple for me to understand. Dr. Gumpert seems to be a German physician, - Jew, I suppose, who quitted Hitler's domain in 1936, and, I suppose, perhaps came to the United States, although I am not sure about that point. What the man has to say seems to make sense and much of the data either refreshes my memory or acquaints me with new facts I haven't known before. The person reading this book is alright and so is the material but perhaps it is the Republican Convention or some such that makes me contented to nod as soon as I call it a day and get rigged up for a bit of reading in lieu of Chicago radio clap-trap.

I was delighted tonight when reminded of an expression, common enough in this region, but somehow almost forgotten through chance. A passing pilgrim this afternoon had left me some peaches and grapes. Tonight Peter passed this way and I inquired:

"Which would you rather have, some peaches or grapes", to which he promptly responded: "Who me.. I ain't got no rather.".....

5558

Wednesday, July 9th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Really, you know, it would do no harm to have my head examined.

I sat down to hear Ed. Morrow's report. That would take 15 minutes, after which I had a stack of things to do. But Ed. Morrow had been pushed off the air by the Convention, and I got so fascinated by the functioning of those Democratic functionings in a Republican gathering that that 6 hours or so have elapsed, and only now I seem to have sense enough to choke the radio in favor of old Dr. Underwood. But it was pleasant to see the Taft forces getting a drubbing on their steal of the Georgia and Texas delegates and since my day had been fairly active, the physical rest was probably a good investment. Surely I shouldn't have difficulty "resting my eyes" after this little chat before folding up my beard.

The ladies I came so close to yesterday but didn't meet, came back this morning and we had a pleasant sitting and they left seemingly much satisfied with the information about old de Meziere they had found. They were gracious enough to remark on their way out that even though they had obtained nothing by way of information concerning their present project, the visit would have been of inestimable value since the Melrose tour meant something quite different and more telling than anything ever to be found in archives. In short they were not of the type of mind that is Madam General's. As a matter of fact, they might travel far to see some such marvel as, say, the Acropolis, and wouldn't turn away disappointed as they declared that not all the shingles on the edifice were properly regimented.

A telephone call from some Arizona people wanting to pass this way took me to the telephone at the store as the Texas ladies left. There sat Earle Long chatting with J. H., as both were eating ice cream out of paper cups and drinking cokes from bottles. The ex-Governor's voice is always raspy with a sandpaper scratch that is arresting although not to pleasant, albeit striking. I didn't linger for more

5559

than an exchange of amenities, for I had some other matters awaiting me and besides, I concluded the Longs weren't seeking out the Henrys at Melrose unless something particular was brewing. On his Winfield farm, --hill land, Earle has about a fifth the number of cattle Melrose numbers, and as neither cotton nor pecaness are raised there, Earle fiddles around in one venture or another, including the silent partnership of the Maclemore cattle auction business in Alexandria. He probably got enough graft during his last administration to make business for gain quite unnecessary.

Long ere now, I should have referred to the odd markings on this memo in pencil. It is a rough outline of the huge, red leathery-like petal of the Orinoco, now beginning to fall, one each day. Usually the baby bananas, never attaining a height half as great as the Orinoco, begins opening its lovely, pale purple blossoms before the giant Orinoco, and in order to lend them encouragement to get well out in front this year, I have been coddling the babies by vast supplies of water in places where they are doing unusually well. But one thing that makes plants fascinating is their tendency to do the unpredictable, even as do people, and this year, in spite of the care they have received, the robust 7 and 7 foot babies haven't so much as offered a sign of an embryo flower, -- save one. This is a scrubby little old plant about two and a half or three feet in height, -- a sort of dwarf baby that looks as though it were suffering from a mixture of malnutrition and a scurvy, sitting way off by itself in the most unfavorable and driest place in the gardens. It, of course, just to prove something or other, has defied all the rules of life and custom and during the past three or four days, has unfolded the loveliest exotic flower one could ever imagine. It's too late for me to start drawing parallels, but somewhere in all this there is a relationship as between this neglected plant that has come into richest loveliness and the inexplicable grandiflora seed that selected the top of the palm tree to show what a seed could really do if it set its mind to it.

Returning to Chicago, I must remark that there was one remark by a newspaper man and one vote by a delegate that struck me with great force. At the conclusion of a typical and outrageous speech by Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin, a commentator remarked to the effect that the Senator, remaining true to character, had delivered another middle of the gutter speech. As for the vote, I refer to the millionaire Pennsylvania oil man, McQue, or some such, who first voted for General Grant and then corrected himself to cast his ballot in favor of General MacArthur. It's all so fearful and wonderful.....

Dora 7/4
Maurita 7/8
5560

Thursday, July 10th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How right was that Chicago lady, Mrs. Kelly, in her remarks about the difficulty of accounting for tastes.

I have tuned in to the Republican convention once or twice tonight, but seem to have struck the least interesting spots, for each time I drew nothing but a racket, the voices of delirious men and women, some mighty poor singing and general pandemonium. How full grown people can go in for such high-jinx, I can't imagine. As for suitable material for radio reception, I can think of nothing more meaningless and dull and surely the money expended on transmitting such stuff is sheer waste. But perhaps it is more entertaining on television and I suppose the participants on the floor find all this business much to their liking, --I hope, --since anyone not possessed of enthusiasm for such non-sense wouldn't remain long in such surroundings.

The Orinoco flower continues to enchant me and naturally I call it to everyone's attention. Among today's visitors were people from Baton Rouge and Natchitoches, people in their 60's, and oddly enough, although life time residents of Louisiana, none of them had ever seen the Orinoco blossom. Several people in town have Orinoco plants and they grow with vast abandon around Baton Rouge, and in both places, I am sure, are bound to produce fruit with more or less regularity, although I must say that for some reason the Melrose plants, of which there are dozens scattered about, -- dozens, for example, running the length of the store, but only those along the gallery at Yucca seem to come into production. The reason why so few people have seen the fruit forming, I suppose, is simply because few people take time to examine the plant. In the case of cotton, so many people of Louisiana visiting the African House, express enchantment at the sight of the bouquet of cotton, still on the stalks, for while everyone has seen fields of the stuff all their lives, a surprising number of them have never been within arm's reach of the lint while still ungathered. There's something about it that reminds one of shoemaker's children never having shoes.

5561

You recently recalled the similarity in last names as between a man of the ante bellum period, prominent as a surveyor and that of an individual recently become a member by marriage of the local family. In regard to that same individual, the scandal mongers are of course having a field day, and are making the most of it. For example, there is the case of the Reverend Green, that cork-pot preacher who figured in the press a few years ago when one or two newspapers ran his picture, snapped when said Baptist Divine was engaged in burning "Mid Summer Fires" in the streets of Natchitoches. The latest wrinkle, according to gossip, is that the Reverend one evening be-took himself to the street where the lady of dubious virtue dwells, and proceeded to shout his denunciations in the direction of her domicile from his vantage point on the curb. This cause but mild interest on the part of the neighbors until the same gentleman of the robe actually entered the house to carry out his rebuke in greater intimacy, and, it is said, he did such a thorough job that although the shouts subsided, he didn't actually complete his mission until dawn of the following day when he was seen leaving the residence in a very subdued manner. In view of the Aswell inclination to present the tawdry side of life, it would seem he has some excellent material within easy range of his own neighborhood. A phrase of a popular song of years back keeps running through my mind: - "Oh, give me a June night, the moonlight and you....." and it occurs to me Mr. Aswell might spin a tale concerning the Reverend, entitling the same "A June Knight". Don't you think so.

In the field of the rapid adjustment of animals and birds to new situations and self preservation is ever so manifest this year, now that the poisoning of the cotton by tractors is getting under way, --usually a couple of weeks before the airplane method is employed. The tractor method got under way last Monday and automatically the numbers of furred and feathered friends in the gardens jumped amazingly. The quantity of rabbits was ample in June but within the last few days the jack rabbit population has grown astonishingly. The D. D.T. or whatever that is sprayed on the foliage in the fields is killing but the food supply of greenery in the gardens isn't effected and the animals seem to sense this instantly. I suppose the number of bugs and worms in the fields, too, may have dropped instantly with the application of the poison and accordingly the birds seem to concentrate on our feeding bars and where ever I stir the ground with a hoe. Undoubtedly flocks of them take to the woods, too, but since birds usually seem to prefer living in proximity to man, --if not a Wenk, - scores of them are taking up new residence in the bamboo hedges and the becanes. It is said

Robina 7/9
Cottle King 7/7
5562

Friday, July 11th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I chanced to be at the store just before noon when the radio was carrying the first ballot vote of the Convention. We waited until the Virgin Islands had casts the final, - its "unanimous single vote for Eisenhower", and as the General still lacked a few votes to give him the nomination, we concluded we could easily eat our dinner before the second ballot had proceeded very far, and so we let the store --and radio, --and went merrily on our way. Picture my surprise a half hour later when I turned in on my own machine, expecting to find the second ballot well in progress, only to discover there had been no need for one, since Minnesota, following the Virgin Islands vote, had requested the right to change its vote from Stasson to Eisenhower, thus bringing the whole business to an end abruptly and without further ado.

But tonight I don't know the name of the Vice Presidential candidate, although I suppose he has long since been selected. One of the unending "scattered shower" things has been going on for hours, without any rain at all but no end of grumbling in the skies, and the electricity from on high has so scrambled radio reception that one can hear nothing but incessant bangs. The last I heard, there was talk about one of the California Senators being named to run for the Vice Presidency. If I remember correctly there (their) names are, --in spite of the suggestion of a vaudeville listing, - Nolan and Nixon. I have heard both gentlemen over the radio during the past year but can never seem to remember which is which. But I am sure that one of them is a bag, and I hope he isn't the one to be selected. The bag I have in mind is the one who beat the drum so madly in favor of the new Immigration Law, which is certainly an outrageous piece of business.

Well, so much for politics, and if the thunder from heaven had only brought us rain, the ignorance would be worth sustaining so far as anything coming out of the Chicago stock yard district. But rain we shall probably not get, and yet I must say that while it is terribly dry, we haven't as yet reached drought proportions, and there will be rains eventually, --and conventions, too.

5563

On the home front, there doesn't seem to be anything of special interest "cooking".

A telephone from Sister to J. H. announced that she is entertaining some of the Garret kinfolk from New Roads over this week end at Cloutierville, and will bring them to Melrose on Saturday. That is really something to look forward to, as I haven't seen Sister since her Chicago hijira, and I can't imagine what the Garrets, whom I know, can be thinking about if they are accepting week end hospitality in the Wenk menage.

One Rebecca Walk, a teacher in the St. Augustine school on Little River came to see me this afternoon. She has in mind gathering pictures of things throughout Louisiana which are related to the development of the negro, with a view of showing the pictures and presenting appropriate data to her classes. Melrose seemed to be a fitting subject to begin with and the more so since St. Augustine's is built on Melrose. I was interested in La Walker's projected program. I am glad to jot down some data for her over the week end. I even went so far as to accept her invitation to visit the school and harangue the students. La Walker said a car would come for me any day at any time I cared to name. I named 9 a.m. as convenient and suggested we compare notes as to what day when she calls for the data on Monday. The lady is pure black, - which is worthy of note, so many of the teachers of color are mulattoes, and I am especially glad this is so for St. Augustine's, since all the students are pure "D" black.

Flopping back to the Republican Convention once more, and, as you are perfectly justified in hoping, the final time, I want to mention two points:

first, Mr. Taft's Senatorial colleague from Ohio, Mr. Bricker, in addressing the Convention immediately following the Eisenhower nomination, declared with vehemence that "we" shall continue to fight until every last vestige of the New Deal and Fair Deal have been destroyed, which sounds mighty stupid and the best summation I have run across as expressing the will of the Old Guard, and

second, I want to express my wonder as to what in the world happened to "the forgotten man" of the Convention, one Herbert Hoover. His advent was hailed with such eee-clatt, and his speech heralded with such applause, I am puzzled that following his hour on the platform, I haven't been able to find hide nor hair of the man. Perhaps he is polishing up his armour to join Mr. Bricker in tilting at wind mills.....

5564

Sunday, July 13th, 1952.

Memorandum: The pot is the thing, --but more of that anon.

It has been a hurly-burly sort of week end, tiresome but withal rather satisfying for the little seed planted here and there for ultimate flowering.

I don't seem to remember much about Saturday, save that the Wenks came in force during the afternoon, bringing their New Roads kin folk with them, --a cousin, Frances, who is a sister of the ex-Madam Wurtelle. A big endurance contest developed between Sister and me, when she declared she wasn't leaving this house until I had promised to accompany her and the family to Cloutierville. She said: "I guarantee to pour you back before it gets too late, if you know what I mean", and I told her I knew the quality of her whiskey and comprehended perfectly but that I had no intention of going. Eventually she pulled out.

After supper J. H. came by to say that Madame de Montespan was in the neighborhood, and had asked that he bring me around. I accepted the invitation but delayed starting until so late that she, thinking herself deserted, had already departed for Alexandria. I saw her for a few moments this noon, following dinner across the fence, --the first time in months, I believe.

But she was leaving for Alexandria early as, I believe, J. H. was, too, and Pat by himself, for Pat had returned from Washington last evening. Ostensibly J. H. and Pat were going to call on Maynie at the hospital. It is said his kidneys are fast playing out. I believe a couple of transfusions have been given. It would appear he might not survive from this malady, although today or a year hence, I suppose, might witness the end, - unless some miracle cure is effected.

This morning, to get on with the pot business, Dr. Rand telephoned me from Alexandria to say they wouldn't be up until

5565

nest Sunday, but he wanted to let me know he had found a couple of pots for me and it was merely a question of transportation that intervened between their present situation and this bend of the river. I told him the transportation would be forthcoming. I took the matter up with J. H. immediately and he said a cattle truck would be heading for Alexandria Tuesday and the items could be brought home with no difficulty at all. I shall be glad of one for the avant-cour, but, should I get the second one, some distance South of Alexandria, I shall perhaps rest it temporarily in front of the big house where Dr. Rand has had an idea I have been going to place one. Later it can be moved easily enough to another situation.

Mrs. Andrew Bowman who had written she would be up this afternoon, telephoned to say guests had arrived unexpectedly which would force her to delay her trip for another Sunday. This suits me perfectly, as I should be glad to have the Cane River Contry plates here when she arrives, since she may want to use some in her Village shop, and it will be easy to give them to her when she passes this way. I had hoped the plates might be here during late July, but I haven't had a response from Rock Hall regarding any tentative shipping date.

I was glad to have a few minutes chat with Pat alone. He had much to tell me about his visits to interesting places about Washington, Philadelphia and New York. He stressed Mount Vernon and Williamsburgh especially, which was a pleasant surprise, since he did so either because he was manifesting an unusual Henry trait of thinking up something to talk about that would be of interest to his listener or because he had really be impressed by the places. When we said goodbye, and after I had shown him the sketch of the Cane River Contry, I asked him while in Europe seeing marvelous things to sometimes remember, - excuse the splint infinitive, that I had long thought of two historic American sites in the form of a mathematical equation: - That Melrose as a plantation is to Louisiana what Williamsburgh as a colonial town is to Virginia. He repeated the phrase and seemed to like it. I think it may linger with him for a while. And thus are tiny seeds planted that some day may bear rich fruit in the field of preservation and appreciation.

So played out the week end, and I hope yours was less hurly-burly but withal crammed full of opportunities to relax.....

Robina 7/11/52
5566

Monday, July 14th, 1952.

Memorandum:

This is the day, if memory serves, when we all should join in the chorus of "Allons, enfants de la Patrie". But the local cannon never so much as exploded and what ditties I indulged in were on the same key I generally employ for rather dull pilgrims, for I had half a dozen today. And, of all places they might have hailed from, --Conroe, Texas.

Raynie's health seemed the big topic of conversation locally. J. A., after telephoning Joe last night, telephoned him again this noon, advising him to be in readiness for a funeral. Celeste drove down to the hospital this afternoon and the Baton Rouge Henrys drove up to Alexandria for a brief call. Bleeding of the kidneys have required three transfusions during as many days of late, and at supper I was completely baffled when J. A. remarked that Raynie had had the same difficulty a year ago and it wouldn't be surprising if he were back in Matchitoches by the end of the week and cranking up his car and driving it himself up and down the road to Melrose. I make no sense out of any of it.

R. 36-7
7-7-52
I know you will be mildly interested to read the enclosure. If it seems best, just destroy it after reading. At least don't bother to return it to me as I have no wish to preserve it, although I subscribed to the reference to potential congeniality which I thought you would enjoy reading, and I felt sure you would be as floored as was I by the news about the travels of the little doctor. It's just another case in which the Madam would have remarked: "Anything you do is alright, but don't do it". Off hand I should say that last summer's August heat that impelled flight to the West Coast isn't likely to be much less this middle of July, - at least not from any reports I have read, --or any thermometers either, but that is merely a detail, and I reckon the real reason is that the lady perhaps gets bored in one place within a certain time and simply has to move on to a new place or back to a former one. It represents a type of restlessness I have never known and so I am quite incapable of comprehending the motivating forces behind it.

5567

In the field of horticulture, I am puzzled by the
dwaddling of the butterfly lilies this year. After the
mildest winter on record, I assumed there would be "the ghosts
of butterflies", to borrow the "arrish phrase, all over the
place by the middle of July but it appears I was mistaken.
It is true there are a couple of little buds, but unless I read
all signs awry, there won't be an unfolding of perfumed wings
before the end of the month. Both at Arenbourg and Yucca
I give them liberal libations daily. Usually heat plus moisture
produces the tropics but there's nothing tropical about
the flowering of the butterfly lilies this year.

I had to go fishing about in the ether waves to find Ed. Morrow
tonight. I usually hear him over a Columbia affiliate in
Shreveport, but tonight the Morrow time was taken over by
some prohibitionist, - which doesn't seem at all like Mr. Morrow.
But I finally caught up with him for W W L of the Roosevelt Hotel,
New Orleans. Somehow everything about the impending Democratic
Convention seems anti-climactic. It appears the Party will
rig up a plank more liberal than the Republicans, which wouldn't
be difficult, and they will no doubt select as intelligent a
nominee, and surely a more liberal one, but that scarcely seems to
matter, either, since Mr. Eisenhower, unless some unimaginable
blunder is committed, will probably sail slap through November
4th with all flags flying and like one of F. D. R.'s famous runs,
will probably sweep everything including Maine and Vermont
which F. D. R. didn't. It's an odd thing, how ultra conservative
the Republican Party has become during the past 20 years, al-
though it has always been just that. What I mean to say is that
although the scant opinions thus far expressed by Mr. Eisenhower
seem to be conservative enough, and yet since they don't seem
quite so conservative and reactionary as the Taft-Hoover-MacArthur
trio, they seem almost liberal by contrast.

I like the idea of the Democrats in recommending a plank
favoring nation wide primary votes for the selection of candidates.
The initial purpose seems to be to get a man whom the people want
rather than one trumped up by the politicians at the last
minute. I haven't heard if they have proposed a like ballot
for selecting the Vice President, but assume not. But with
20 per cent of the Vice Presidents of the United States
eventually becoming Presidents, that selection, so often skimmed
over, seems pretty important, too. But I must now write
some letters and then fold

5568

air.
Tuesday, July 15th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I am sending this by air in order it may reach your
true hand before the sketch of the Grandpere plate which
arrived from Baltimore in the morning's post and which
I immediately transferred to another folder and handed
back to the postman.

It was so good to have your letter in the same post
and to know you contemplated a nice cozy week end.
What a business, --finding a flock of Bolivars on your door-
step on your return from the mountains, but the promise
of impending quiet held out the hope that you might
catch your breath a bit regardless, following your return to
town. Just before mail time this morning, I learned the ladies
across the fence were preparing to take off for a frolic, -
I believe at the island camp on Magnolia. Tomorrow they leave
here at 6 so that Adam Regard may have some tests made at
the hospital which will take the better part of the day. I
hoped to get the clerk to run through the data on the plate but
that seemed futile, since he pronounced the data as
alright without enumerating any of it to me. And so I
made a quick decision and simply slapped the whole thing
into another folder and sent it out by the same post to
you, thinking you wouldn't mind too much giving it a
"gander", and sending it on to Rock Hill, if it is alright,
with merely a slip of paper attached by clip or some such,
reading simply "K-Kay. f.m." or some such. If you prefer
a note or if corrections are necessary, a sheet of
plantation stationery is attached herewith which you may
use.

I asked these three matters be adjusted on this final
sketch:

first, the letters, --f.m.c. --be substituted for the word
family, in the column at the right, just in front of the
date of 1829.

second, that the word Parish, carrying the letter h be
substituted for the word Paris, which had appeared in the
original sketch, and

third, that somewhere on the plate, - I don't care where,
be added the words, --Contrived, 1952, Francois Mignon.

5569

There is no rush about getting the thing off, and if you would care to hold it for a day or two, believing we should have it photographed, so that a film will be to hand eventually, that would be alright. But please don't do so if the photographing is very expensive, for we can wait and have the finished plate photographed instead. As a work of Art, this sketch isn't too hot, but it did occur to me that if the Picayune article is delayed for a photograph of me at work, it might interest the publishers to include this somewhat different type of thing with the photo of the finished Plantation plate. But this is of no moment, and you may decide either way you think best, and, if further corrections are necessary, --assuming the three mentioned above have not been carried out, don't consider photographing at all.

And may I say thanks to you for handling all of this for the present project and me and us.

A bill of lading covering the first part of the Cane River country plates arrived today, saying shipment had been made in part on the 9th. I suppose they will be here shortly, perhaps in a day or so, and it goes without saying I shall roll a couple in your direction forthwith.

And may I tell you how right it turns out that you were in sending me the Baumgartner document, giving the date as 1856, not 1853, as to the establishment of the Parish. One of the Reverend Fathers came to me for a couple of hour's sitting today, asking me to assist him with the historical data being prepared for the impending centenary celebration. He said that just yesterday Father Callahan had discovered that the date was 1853, not 1856. I told him the plate could not be changed at this late hour. He said the Reverend Fathers planned to defy history and go ahead with their celebration next year regardless. When the church gets to messing around with history..... Well, anyway, among other things it just goes to prove that it's difficult to contrive a plate carry much data on its design and have it free of all errors. But if the ex-resident of Duquesne can take it, I certainly can, for while it is our plate, it is his Church that has determined the dates.

If all the above seems unusually hodge-podge and lacking in clarity, and if you would prefer having me look at the sketch before it goes to Rock Hall, just send it slap back to me, for there is ample time. But if the three items mentioned have been taken care of, and the thing meets with your approval, just address it to Mrs. Eliza Beth Edwards Cowperthwaite, Edwards China, Rock Hall, Kent County, Maryland. And either way, blessings on you for all the kind things you are forever doing for me.....

Augustine Detroyer
1768 1856

Letter to Detroyer
1770-1832
Yucca (P)
Corrected 1953
Cane of St. Augustine built by
Augustine and Louis Detroyer
1829
Parish of St. Augustine established 1830
Church rebuilt 1831
Original Church of St. Augustine
1836 North 1/4 of 31st & Grand
Augustine and Calibrated
L.S.
wood
Clerical
of St. Augustine

Irina Tucker

5570

Wednesday, July 16th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The pot is the thing and has arrived.

But more about that in a moment. Something happened that there was no cattle to be sent but just before heading out for New Orleans, sent a truck with a couple of people aboard to Alexandria regardless. A pin-point rain had been falling steadily all night, as it has all day, and the whole plantation was resting as it were.

But the two truck drivers, on reaching Alexandria, discovered the pot was more than they could manage and so they telephoned back for extra stalwart arms. Seven departed forthwith, and the rest of the day was all quiet until about 6 o'clock when the truck pulled in. It seems the 7 gentlemen sent to assist had no more effect on moving the great cauldron than the first two. Thereupon Dr. Rand telephoned for a wrecker, and finally the thing was hoisted aboard. I suppose it weighs about half a ton. Fences and growing things made it impossible to get the thing very close to the spot - wanted it, slap in front of Yucca in the "avant-cour" but we got it fairly close by driving slap through the Gardener's Garter Garden, beds of cannas and heaven knows what all. On the morrow we shall take down some of the fence of the "avant-cour" and slide the thing along somehow and by tomorrow night, I hope, it will be in its permanent resting place, brimming over with a few hundred gallons of water on whose surface some purple flagged water hyacinthes will be riding high, and the pot will look as though it has been there forever. Its bold and heavy, horizontal lines coincide perfectly with the architecture of Yucca, and I think we ought to get some lovely pictures of the two, the roof line of Yucca reflected in the mirror of the pot's surface, - if and when some good photographer gets around this way.

I thought the Cane River items might arrive today, what with the bill of lading indicating they were shipped on the 9th, but perhaps they will come tomorrow. I am curious to see how the several corrections came out, as I never did see the

5571

final sketch after these adjustments had been taken care of. And, of course, it will be unnecessary for me to remark that my impatience to get a couple rolling in your direction will be boundless until I actually see them on the way.

What with one thing and another, I haven't heard any weather reports today, but last night I gathered we were scheduled to get a mild blow from the Gulf where shipping was cautioned against fairly heavy seas. I suppose the past 24 hours of dampness is a result of whatever is stirring along the Gulf, and as we seem to have received about two inches of rain, as against on one 16th of an inch registered in Shreveport, the moisture can be assumed to be fairly confined to the Southern section. Perhaps Shreveport didn't need any moisture anyway, what with the election, mentioned in a recent enclosure, having turned out favorably for the wets.

Although I did not make a round this afternoon, I understand the ladies across the fence returned from the hospital late this afternoon, following Adam Regard's tests. She had remarked to me the other day that the whole thing was useless since she was feeling alright, save from the lingering aftermath of the virus infection, but it seemed easier to go and be done with the business than to resist the pressure that would otherwise be fretting her. She is such a kind soul, it is good to know this latest wrinkle is finished and I hope she has a flock of peaceful times slap ahead.

The enclosure was delivered to me last Saturday by messenger. I just got around to read it today. It, of course, speaks for itself.

There is a curious thing about the association as between the writer of the enclosure and Mrs. Andrew Bowman, and is perhaps best to be explained, I believe, on the grounds that that latter is apparently one of those who labors under the impression that the lady in question is a particular friend of mine, - and of no one else on Cane River. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Bowman is a very nice person, a friend of the Adam's and also a kindly disposed acquaintance of Celeste. I think she would simply die of mortification if she really knew the true facts and yet I can think of no way to set her straight without getting involved in some kind of a three way row which I should not relish at all since I can't abide even a one way one. In a recent conversation I had scouted the idea of giving Mrs. Bowman's The Village Shop, the exclusive handling of the Cane River Country item in the Alexandria neighborhood but now I am not so sure I want to have any business dealings with her, for, out of the kindness of her heart, she is likely to invited la

on her calls, and la ontespan to accompany

Miss Nellie
card from Constance
Kleiser

5572

Thursday, July 17th, 1952

Memorandum:

How nice to find your week end letter in today's post.

It had so many interesting things to tell me, I know nowhere to begin, and so I guess I'll just plunge in by congratulating you on the twist you gave things effecting the status of L. J.

How much satisfaction must be yours in having contrived this new departure. It delights my soul to think that your architecture has fashioned a new frame-work that is going to right things up so pleasantly for her, and in view of the business location, do I foresee the possibility that you may even be able to travel a bit together, or at least run the chance of seeing each other occasionally en route. It is such a marvelous sensation, knowing that a new day is dawning for her and, as you may have noticed a billion times, following your efforts in behalf of another, the golden dawn provided for others has a way of reflecting itself splendidly in a million unexpected directions.

It goes without saying, too, that I was enchanted at the report of your outing and how cooperative the temperature, with ample heat during the day and sufficient coolness at night to make a quilt pleasureable. I reckon you might even have borrowed the wool tack and liked it.

I incline to agree with you in the optimism with which we may contemplate the occupancy of the White House by the General.

What I suppose is going to happen will be President Eisenhower attending to much of the business, especially the foreign portfolio, while Mr. Dewey lends much advice if not, indeed, direction to things domestic. My guess is that Mr. Eisenhower can win the election pretty easily, and without any assistance from the Old Guard and I'm hoping he doesn't kow-tow too much to them before November 4th and not at all afterward, although probably Taft could up-set the whole legislative program in the Senate if he wanted to, much as he did for Mr. Truman, but I think he is likely to do that anyway. The Nixon nomination of Vice President enchants me not at all, but let us hope he will be one of those officials who sometimes get lost in that office.

5573

I think Arriman would be my choice, if the Democrats were to win. There has been lots of talk about Senator Humphries I like. I was astonished to learn from somebody or other at dinner the other day that Humphries had studied something or other at L. S. U.

And may I thank you for telling me about the latest wrinkle in the Elliott Roosevelt doings. Somehow there is something a little sad about thinking of the F. D. R. properties being sold off piece-meal, but there's solace in knowing Madam Roosevelt retains her place and that Hyde Park remains forever well buttressed as a national shrine. I had heard nothing about the sales you mentioned, and am sorry Canada didn't do something about Campo-Bello as a monument, too, --there is so little opportunity for any other nation to make a gesture, such as the one outlined a while back in the McKensie-King correspondence, but, of course, that could be done at any time in the future, should anyone in the country of our neighbor to the North care to do so.

And may I thank you, too, for your thoughtfulness in making the offer regarding Grandpere's design. There was a bit of telepathy or a coincidence in the fact that you touched upon the matter at about the time I referred to the sketch going forward to you for your inspection and approval. Isn't it wonderful how you had acquainted me with the 1856 date for the establishment of St. Augustin's parish before the Reverend Fathers, living here for years, should have discovered the error of their historic ways. But that's the characteristic way with you, to know about such matters although miles from the neighborhood, while they, in their ignorance of facts, --perhaps divines aren't supposed to be factual, --go slap ahead with the centenary celebration three years in advance of the one hundredth anniversary.

With the assistance of 10 or 12 negroes, I got the pot moved to an approximate point where I wanted it, and set up on a base perhaps 10 or 12 inches from the level of the ground. I was called to the telephone just as things were beginning to jell, and so the precise magical point wasn't quite hit, but 20 or 24 strong arms were anxious to get the thing accomplished, not only because they knew a jug of wine would be their immediate reward but also because an impending shower was just on the point of breaking, and as it might have so softened the ground that work would have to be delayed indefinitely, they smashed through to completion, and it is alright. It's precisely what I wanted by way of a pot and after I have some colorful zinnias in bloom around its base, it will be pretty as well as ponderously impressive. Again my thanks for your grand letter and all the happiness it brought me.

5574

Friday, July 18th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so the plates came this noon and a couple of them will start rolling your way in the same Saturday post that takes this note.

I talked about a companion piece for the Melrose Plantation plate. Well, not only did we get a companion piece which certainly should resemble the one to the other, but we drew a set of Siamese twins, for you can't tell the Plantation one from the Cane River one. And while it is true that twins should always appear alike, the similarity in this instance is so striking that I think you are headed for a disappointment. But then, there is no great loss without some small gain and at least we haven't got to give thought to having the second photographed since we have it already to all intents and purposes in the one already "struck".

All in all, it has been a busy day, but I must pause long enough to knock wood: --for marvelous to relate, there were no pilgrims who ever succeeded in making the front gate.

The Dark Duke appeared on my gallery early this morning, saying he would like to give me a hand in putting the final coat of white paint on the blinds, being converted into a screen. I was all in favor of that. And Lo! before first dark, that job was completed and half a dozen other odds and ends.

Sometime during the noon hour, Log sauntered by the gin, where he fell to talking with Mr. Youngblood, the mechanic, who has been supervising the re-conditioning of that institution. Log must have remarked that I wasn't quite satisfied with the place the pot had finally landed. Later Log told me of this and said, which made me laugh, --

"You know that Mr. Youngblood is sure a fine white man, and he told me somethin' all colored folks what's go sense already knowed. He say that he had lived all his life in Watchitoches and had always heard tell of Melrose and knowed it was down this way alright but that it was you what woke folks up to knowin' Melrose was really somethin'."

5575

og is a sight. And half an hour later, Mr. Youngblood appeared, bringing half a dozen colored stalwarts from the gin with him. He said yesterday's rain had forced everyone to hurry so, he thought maybe I would like to have the pot placed a little differently, which was kind of him, I must say. And so I pointed to the magical spot and left him and his crew and five minutes later the trick had been turned, and that was that. Mr. Youngblood's wife is coming home from the Alexandria Hospital tomorrow, after having recently had a baby, --their third, I believe. When Mr. Youngblood left, he had a little thin package under his arm and declared he was the happiest man in the Parish, since he would now have a little surprise gift for the wife on her return.

I took ten minutes off to grab a cup of coffee across the fence at 9. Following the 1 dies return from the hospital day before yesterday, they went on a frolic at Magnolia yesterday, and so I hadn't seen them for a couple of days. One of the Reverend Fathers from St. Augustin's arrived just after me. I exerted vast effort to secure facial control when, as he spoke, I found these words formulating in my mind:

"The priest lies and the bishop swears to it,"

for what Father Rondeau had to say was that Father Callahan had asked him to tell me that he had just been advised by the Bishop, --Greco of Alexandria, that indeed the 1853 date for the establishment of the Parish was the correct one and not 1856, and so the centenary plans were going ahead as originally scheduled.

Sometimes when everything gets out of joint all at the same time, I ought to remember that today was finally accomplished the finishing of the screen, the permanent emplacement of the great sugar cauldron and the advent of the plates. And I ought to remember, too, I reckon, that these three happened to come to fruition only after plenty of circumstances had functioned long before, so, in reality, it wasn't any flood but merely a flowering.

I'm so glad you mentioned Egon in your last letter. Your thumbnail sketch was so perfect, I could see him plainly.

And I wanted to thank you, too, for mentioning the Currier and Ives plate you saw in the mountains. Sometime, if convenient, it would be nice to have the name of the manufacturer. Long have I thought of a modified Audubon item, -- a simplification after the manner of Lois Lester creations from the original, and it would always be nice to have the name of the Currier and Ives manufacturer. The Baltimore artist mailed the Grandpere sketch in a Rock Hall folder, so we got no where with that one. But I had better start folding, thanking you again for yesterday's happiness

5576

Little King 7/10/52

Laughlin - I believe

Sunday, July 20th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It was a hurly-burly sort of a week end, but withal rather satisfactory.

Saturday was one of those days, --one of those hot, humid sort of days with nothing on schedule and a million things, mostly odds and ends to undertake. I undertook them all, and even went so far as to neglect taking off my long beard, thinking that after I had converted myself into a complete mud pie, I might as well start in with the razor and end up with the tub.

But along about 3 Mrs. Coombs appeared to report that my reading machine couldn't be fixed until next week, and hard on her heels came Mrs. Holloman and a Miss Bowman. The later contingent was heavily loaded down with cameras and picture taking paraphernalia. With the Picayune in mind, I thought there was no time like the present, and so I waved the wand for the cameras to start, making use of what little there was of my shirt-tail-less shirt, to wipe off a bit of grime and sweat. And so a flock of pictures were forthcoming and some of them, I hope, turned out suitable for the Picayune. And so if you ever chance upon a likeness of what appears to be a disreputable looking long bearded recluse, completely gone to seed, it will probably turn out that I am the subject matter.

At 9 o'clock this morning, Rosalind Aswell telephoned. She said a gentleman whom she did not know and had never seen, telephoned her five minutes before, asking her to drive him to Melrose where he wanted to take pictures of the place and of Clemence Hunter. She said his name was Clarence Laughlin and did I know him. I told her I did and did not need to see him. She said she would not call him back, but wanted to be sure before snubbing him that he wasn't some particular friend of mine.

She said she and Jimmy are busy with the galley proofs of a forth-coming novel, ready for January release, they hoped. She said the article in Reader's Digest is by James A. Aswell, a fifth cousin of Jimmy's, living in Tennessee, who is always trying to sell articles, and sometimes succeeding, in hood-winking the editors into believing they are dealing with James Aswell. Of all the people one would ever want to impersonate, James Aswell would seem to be about the last I could imagine.

5577

Along about three o'clock this afternoon, when I was in the tub, trying to get freshened up a bit before the advent of some European travelers, a tap at my door pulled me all a-drip from my sea shell, and there on the gallery, of course, stood one Clarence Laughlin. It seems he had secured the services of the Crew family, Mr. Crew being Registrar of the college. My greeting was informal and restrained. Mr. Laughlin said he wanted to run through his historical data with me so I might check any errors. I told him he would have to send me his questions and I would be glad to respond. He said he had thought of that but then realized I couldn't read and so thought it better to come for a personal conference, after which he could get some pictures. I told him that no pictures might be taken today and that in spite of my inability to read, I did keep a few channels open with the outside world. I suppose he must have enticed the Crews down here with a promise of a tour, for Mrs. Crew allowed as how she was ready for one. I prayed her to control the impulse until later in the season when, by appointment, I should be glad to arrange it.

What a bag that fellow is. And there is more but that may be saved for a later sitting.

I don't recall if I mentioned that Rosalind said they were rushing the proof sheets of the book in order that they might get off to California shortly, partly pleasure bent, partly business. From that one may assume that Hollywood may be a port of call, a place not unknown to Adam Aswell, and I'm wondering if the movies could be contemplating doing one of the Aswell novels.

J. A. got off on a banker's junket to Omaha or some such place this afternoon. He was undecided about leaving up to the last moment for Paynie had been carrying on at the hospital, denouncing the doctors, saying he was going home during the afternoon if they didn't cure his kidney difficulty immediately and generally acting like the moron he is. J. A. told me he thought it unwise to leave at such a time if Paynie were actually to fall out within the immediate future. I volunteered a quotation from Adam Robina who once told the Madam who was hasting about going to Wachez because Miss Sally was having heart trouble and might die: - "Just remember what I say, --Miss Sally will still be going strong on Cane River when the rest of us are all in our graves."

The bakers travel by special train, of course, and J. A. finally got off, but you may be sure train travel in return will be too leisurely for him and that he will be flying back no sooner than the pow-wow has gotten well under way.

The Bands never did show up but I reckon they will make it during the week. In the mean time, the pot continues to excite admiration on all sides, and I thought Laughlin was going to have a stroke when I forbade him taking a picture of it on this go-round....

Robina 7/11/52

5578

Monday, July 21st, 1952.

Memorandum:

So seldom do I get in the big road that you will easily imagine my surprise when this morning I found myself in Natchit ches.

The most important thing I attended to was getting a frosted chocolate, for I hadn't tasted one of them in years and little did the person who proffered the drink guess how much I relished it.

As might have been expected, many of the things I hoped to attend to just couldn't be managed on this first go-round, what with people away on vacations, etc. But I was able to present the library with a Cane River plate and put through a like gesture for the Chamber of Commerce, after which I dropped a couple of dozen plates in an emporium which will sample their rolling power during this off season with a view of hoping to be able to determine something about the autumn demands well in advance of delivery time on the part of Rock Hall.

You would have laughed to see how gingerly the secretary of the library handled the plate when I presented it to her for inspection, as I awaited the appearance of the head of the institution. The poor secretary, a woman in her middle 60's, perhaps, just couldn't believe her ears that somebody was actually giving the library something, and so, in order to side-step getting caught in some kind of a sales transaction, floundered about piteously to find just the right word in expressing her opinion of the piece.

It took me but an hour and a half to head out from here and get back, as between 10:00 and 11:30, and as I shall be getting in the big road again on the morrow to contact the newspaper Editor yonder and attend to some other little matters, I shall be entranced if I can make the round trip in as great speed, --and get a frosted chocolate to boot.

5579

Today's post brought a card from Portland, Oregon, and although the initials, "W. S." could be made out by my secretary, that was all. I must say la Storm is getting about the country.

And also from the West Coast came a thin package, containing what the folder described as "an air plant", which, of course, is nothing more or less but 90 per cent Spanish moss and 10 per cent fern. I immediately draped it on a Chinese magnolia in the "avant-cour", "holding the thought" it might flourish, but feeling practically certain that there is so much air astir along Cane River that this type of vegetation doesn't thrive much.

In spite of a couple of rounds with pilgrims during the afternoon, I succeeded in getting the big pot drained of the well water which I had put in the giant cauldron last Saturday. I suppose the pot holds several hundred gallos of water, but it is easy enough to empty, for I simply insert a couple of rubber hose in the thing, draw out the air from the tube, thus starting the water to flowing, and, of course, from then on the thing just syphons itself until it is empty.

The point of all this removal of water is due to the fact that the iron content of the water direct from the well is so great that a heavy scum is instantly formed about the surface of the pot, with the water so charged with rust, after the air strikes it, that the water will never get transparent.

I could easily fill the thing from the well water after the late has gone through the several filters, but as there is chlorine (chlorine) in the resulting flow, that would kill all the gold fish.

And so the pot has been emptied in preparation for receiving just good old fashioned Cane River water. A truck with a few barrels can run down to the spillway and fill up the containers and return forthwith, and one the thing is full, the evaporation should be not more than a bucket a day and that can readily be added from the cistern. And Lored, what a lot of talk about a pot.

You will enjoy the enclosure, for it seems to deal with personalities of whom we have heard before....

5580

TUESDAY
Wednesday, July 22nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

So often during the past couple of hours I have found myself "holding the thought" that circumstances might be favorable in your immediate neighborhood to be tuned in on Chicago. It doesn't happen too often that both Madam Roosevelt and Senator Benton are starred on the same program, and, if Luck did favor your schedule, then I know you found yourself as delighted as did I.

For one who always enjoys ridiculously robust health, I felt considerably out of joint during the past 24 hours, for the virus that has been sweeping the country settled in my intestinal track and put me out of navigation, save for the most pressing matters, and whenever possible in between times, I kept flattened out in the bed.

It wasn't so far back that I was remarking how I think a little extra weight in reserve isn't a bad investment, and I am drawing on mine now. For when not up to par, which is rare, I take a page from Grandpa and Die Frau and forego food, and this seems to work miracles for my ailments usually.

Then, too, there is forever that curious effect that makes itself manifest when circumstances simply force one to mosey about, and often that extra exertion seems to tip the scales in favor of a return to health.

Save for going to meals today, just to maintain routine, but to eat nothing save a glass of milk, I kept flattened out in the bed. Along about 2:30 a tap at my door impelled me to put on a bathrobe and respond. It was Blythe with four ladies, including a Madam Rougeot of whom Dr. Rand had spoken to me before. She is losing her sight and Dr. Rand wanted her to know me, thinking she might get some ideas if she observed the way people could get about regardless.

I explained to the ladies I stood vastly in need of five pretty nurses and asked them to grace the living room while I got dressed. They staid for four hours, which, from my physical status, was long enough, but it was a pleasant sitting, and what was of importance was the fact that Madam Rougeot left in a gay mood, asking if she might come back again shortly for another round.

One interesting political sidelight I learned from Blythe was this: - her neighbor, James Madlemore, is at present in Chicago as a Democratic delegate, and before he left Alexandria for the Windy City,

2280

5581

he told the Rands he was going to vote for Eisenhower in November. This is interesting, it seems to me, since the statement, made last Friday, came from a Democratic delegate days before, perhaps a week before, the Democrats had decided on the identity of their forthcoming candidate. Surely a split of Southern politicians from the party of Democracy doesn't seem so tremendous when, as in this instance, one of the delegates, and this particular one, an aspirant for the candidacy of the Governorship of Louisiana, announces before hand that he isn't going to vote for the Democratic standard bearer any way, regardless of whom that may be.

I am sure you were impressed as was I when during the tremendous ovation accorded Mrs. Roosevelt, Senator Byrd got so mad at the applause accorded that great lady, stood up from his seat in the Virginia delegation, clopped on his hat and stalked from the Convention.

And before ringing off on political matters, I am wondering what office Judge Smedley is running for in Texas. You will note reference to his candidacy in the enclosed letter from Fanny Ratchford who without intending to do so, quite neatly avoids mention of the office being sought. Betty Smedley's husband has been a member of the powerful Railroad Commission in Texas and a judge of the Supreme Court, both of which jobs may or may not be elective ones, I don't know. I occasionally listen to a bit of drum beating from Dallas and San Antonio and North Worth stations in the current political turmoil, but I usually get somebody running for the United States Senate or a Sheriff's job, and the political clap-trap dished out by aspirants of either office are usually enlightening in a moron sort of way, as indicated in an earlier letter regarding the fellow who, among other planks, trumped up one for "giving the country back to God".

As soon as Plythe and her party had departed, I foolishly thought I would do well to flatten out for an hour before the supper bell would impell me to appear at table to keep people from being conscious of my droopy feelings, and so I undressed and folded. But within a few minutes, a violent knocking at my door brought me up standing. A colored youth working at the gin had fallen from a ladder and smashed and splintered the bones of his leg and was being rushed to the hospital, with the store temporarily closed in taking care of that business so that no telephone was available, save across the fence where a party was in progress and the 17 year old youth knocking at my door had no one to telephone the lady doctor that his wife, whom he had snatched from school last March and married, had just fallen on the steps of their cabin and was in the midst of having a miscarriage. It's just like pilgrims say: - "Everything here is so peaceful here it's just like heaven," - except, I hope, one doesn't have an intestinal gripe in heaven.....

Irma Tucker 7/11

5582

Wednesday, July 23rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your air mail of Friday in this morning's post. It seems to have dwaddled mightily along the way, but it arrived safely eventually.

And first off may I tell you how thoughtful it was of you to handle the checking over of the Grandpere sketch and getting it off to Edward's China, and may I give you no end of oak leaf clusters for having the photographs made. For now it appears they may well arrive here in time to reach the Picayune shortly after the Saturday photographs, made here, are forwarded to that office, and it will be advantageous, of course, if all three designs get reproduced, -- the Melrose Plantation plate, the map for the Cane River Country, and this one of Grandpere which, in itself, will introduce a bit of variety in treatment, should all three be reproduced.

The feeling is still embryonic but I am under the initial impression that Grandpere may go over rather better than I had originally assumed. Oddly enough the two or three people, outside the mulattoes who naturally will grab at it, have expressed a desire to have it when it is ready. Frankly, it never occurred to me that anyone would.

Oh, yes, before I forget it, let me report as to the state of my health about which I did much aching in yesterday's spistle. It seems the lady doctor gave some magical medicine Celeste or Madam Regard or bot when they were stricken, -- an odd combination, I believe, of milk of magnesia and bismuth, of all things. One takes four doses in a couple of hours, and Lo! one is back on one's feet and the virus apparently dead. At least so the thing was represented to me, and I sampled the stuff this morning and by afternoon I was as fit as a fiddle.

I wish I had had the stuff yesterday and thereby might have skipped boring you with the details. Then, too, it would have saved me the trouble of knocking off copy for the Natchitoches Times under adverse conditions. But that piece didn't require much effort to begin with, and I got the thing finished and shipped off to the Editor who may do something about it within the next week or so.

5583

As to the enclosure from la Montespan, I guess the identity of everyone mentioned is clear enough, except Miss 32 who is a daughter. The corner described in the letter sounds awful but it is evidently to be taken as an example of favorable advertising.

On the family front, the health condition of Paynie seems as confusing as usual. He won't let his wife leave his room, and as a telephone call is supposed to be put through every day to acquaint this branch of the family with his condition, such a report, made in his listening doesn't amount to much. Frances telephoned from his room this morning, saying his health was about as usual. Later she escaped for a few moments, telephoned Dan in "Athcicoches" to say she understood the kidneys weren't functioning, and expressing the thought that one of his brothers ought to be present. And so Dan telephoned Eugene to telephone J. A. who is at present someplace in Minnesota or Wisconsin, and J. A. will take a plane to get him back this way tonight.

A fine example of how a lack of imagination on the part of one set of people re-acts to the advantage of others is demonstrated by what I learned from Blythe yesterday as to how I came by the pot. It seems her sister, Julia Fyle, has a kindergarten school on the White estate and not too far from the school was situated the great cauldron, full of water and gold fish. The other day a couple of the children were found floating around in the pot and, although they were fished out in time, still they did succeed in getting their adventure reported in the Alexandria Town Talk. Julia thought the pot should be eliminated forth with and Dr. Rand, hearing about, asked Blythe if she thought her mother, Mrs. White, would want me to have it. Blythe asked her and she declared nothing would please her so much. She, herself, had deagged it from a South Louisiana sugar plantation, wrecked by the Civil War half a century earlier and had intended keeping it forever, but as it had become a hazard where it was, she would be delighted it I would accept it.

Now, smart me.....if I had owned the pot, I should have removed the gold fish, cyphoned off the water, tossed in a wheelbarrow of broken brick, on top of which I would have piled a ton of rich soil, in which I would have planted dozens of big gold and red cannas that would have beautified the kindergarten garden and harmed nobody. But I'm glad nobody thought of that one, for really the Yucca setting is bound to be far more perfect than anything could possibly approach with such an object in town.

So turns the world, and I have your Friday letter and am all well, and now I must get to my radio and see what Bob Trout has to report as to how the Democrats are hopping it up in the Windy City...

5584

Thursday, July 24th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Sunday letter in today's post, traveling, as it did, hard on the heels of your air mail of Friday.

I'm so glad you found a bit of time to yourself over the week end and although the fare must have been a little thin in spots, it is nice to know you succeeded in getting lost to time while plodding through some heretofore unexplored pages of Lestan's Diary covering days at Edgewood and the Pine Ridge and Washington neighborhoods. It certainly was odd how these old entries of years back should have come up for examination so shortly after a contemporary Memo reported the visit to Yucca of a couple of the people whose Natchez families appeared in the Lestan notations of so far back.

And I'm glad you had the little garden gathering at Hollis and that prospects of L. J.'s new arrangements are progressing, in pursuance of that visit. Somehow I sense that just as a whole flock of circumstances made so many things out of whack in that menage a few years back, so now, thanks to the impetus given them by your trip to the mountains, and equally impressive chain of circumstances are about to set no end of things to converging on a straighter, happier high-road. Blessings on you and all your good works.

I'm sorry you have been having such steaming weather and by now things are cooling off a little in your neighborhood. While things continue warm in these parts, no heat in the country is ever so devastating, I think, as in town, and especially in Manhattan where the constant humidity makes winters more biting and summers more enervating, with the nights seldom greatly altered by the 20 degree temperature drops which usually take place in the country every 24 hours, affording an unfailing measure of relief to human, animal and plant life.

Pilgrims ganged up on me today for no apparent reason. The thermometer was around 100 and too hot for road running for all save the road runners, and people came from Tennessee, Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana. Except for a little chat with the Knipmeyers between 10 and 10:30, I contended with people all day until after first dark tonight.

For a while tonight, I listened to the wrangling by the Democrats -- and others -- in Chicago. To my way of thinking,

5585

It about boils down to this, the delegates from the recalcitrant States of Virginia, South Carolina and Louisiana are wolves in sheeps' clothing, actually, Republican reactionaries and contributing nothing save liability to what we hope is a preponderantly liberal Democratic Party. The espousal of the Dixiecrat position by the Stevenson forces somehow gives one the feeling that the Stevenson forces are first of all politicians with a view to using any plank or theory, even reactionary, to float into power. Surely such candidates can inspire little confidence on the part of those who incline toward the Democratic Party as opposed to the Republican because the Democratic has long typified liberalism. If the Douglas, Humphries, Lehman liberals could have won in forcing the three reactionary Southern States either to sign the pledge or to withdraw, then liberalism would have won. Had the three reactionary States withdrawn, the Democratic Party would have lost no votes in those States anyway since, through evidence and surmise, none of those groups are going to do other than vote Republican anyway. And if they had been forced out of the Democratic Party, the three of them might frankly have gone Republican in name, and three vigorous Southern States under the Republican banner would be a salutary innovation, since the reactionary Southern States have too long masqueraded as Democrats whereas in reality they have been nothing but a bunch of unopposed die-hards.

Inowing nothing whatsoever about Stevenson, I get the impression from tonight's Chicago doings that he is all politician and of that slick variety that leaves little room for the virtues of statesmanship. And I suppose lots of other people gained similar impressions and therefore the election of Eisenhower will be viewed with scant regret by the liberals in the Democratic Party since the only other alternative would be a politician, too slippery to suggest integrity either in a liberal or reactionary sort of way.

On the home front, I saw J. A. a few minutes at 6 o'clock this morning. Yesterday afternoon he was on the Watkins Estate at Winona, Wisconsin when the telephone call reached him to come home. The country host of the Bankers put a 15 seater private plane at his disposal and he flew to Chicago where he caught a commercial plane to Shreveport and so was here sometime after midnight. Paynie, in the mean time, decided to take a turn for the better and now is said to be well on the mend, receiving droves of visitor and so on. Tomorrow the story from that quarter may be the reverse, but one never anticipate such strange twists. As for my own good health, it is abundant, thanks to the lady doctor's magical medicine and I'm hitting on all cylinders, and may you be able to say as much for your own good self.....

5586

Friday, July 25th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Tuesday letter in this morning's post, together with your copy of the letter to Rock Hall which strikes me as just perfect, and thanks no end.

And how nice of you to say you like the plates. I'm glad they didn't dwindle along too slowly and reached your true hand unbroken. It goes without saying that if at any time you should have occasion to use additional ones, you have simply to say the word and they will start rolling.

In this morning's post came three photographs, taken last Saturday afternoon. I immediately re-addressed them and sent them along to you. I don't need them back unless, because of their size, they present a problem for you to handle conveniently, in which case you might bounce them back in this direction.

The quick glance I gave them prevented me from noticing all the details. One quick look, however, was sufficient to reveal that the camera, obviously good, did a fine job in catching the patches of sweat induced by Saturday's heat and humidity, especially in the case of the one wherein the Blessed Martin and I are considering the situation. You will be as delighted as I that the likeness of St. Veronica's Veil came out as clearly as it did. As a composition, the thing seems poorly centered but I'm glad your Veronica is present regardless.

In the case of the composition wherein I am fiddling with the screen, the photographer missed my point in specifying all that would show would be the end of the screen nearest the camera plus the complete composition of ancient instruments on the wall of the Chapel immediately into the background. I believe another shot along those lines was taken, and I shall see if I cannot obtain the films to see if they are any good.

As for the portrait of the pot, it speaks for itself, -- the iron one, I mean, and I trust, because of the presence of the figure in the picture, you may get a true concept of the 6 foot diameter of the thing. I must have been fiddling with

5587

the water hyacinths when the camera functioned. You will agree with me the camera did an excellent job in getting the shingles on Yucca's roof and the current crop of bananas. If I am unable to obtain the films later, I might eventually want a likeness of the pot to send to the Rands and especially Madam White, for she will never get up here to see it, and it would be nice to give her this glimpse of her beloved old garden piece in its new setting.

I think there were about a dozen shots taken in all, and I shall write today to ask if all or some are available for borrowing purposes.

We are scheduled to have lots of Henrys this week end, although it is said the Wenks are not coming. The Baton Rouge and Texas ones are en route right now, I believe and will probably devoted them selves mostly to a visit to Raynie at the Alexandria hospital where, it is said, he isn't doing so well again.

I had just finished reading your kind letter when a telephone came through from Mrs. Peyton Cunningham of Natchitoches, saying some of the Prudhommies at least, --her mother was a grand-daughter of "Uncle Phanor", were delighted at the sight of the plates of the Cane River Country and that she herself had dashed out and bought some in town. Madam Vernon Cloutier telephoned Celeste, saying it had been her intention to get down to see me today but she had been stricken by the prevailing virus and so was remaining at Beaufort. She wanted to say that she was enchanted at the sight of the plate and was going to want several. They will retail at \$3.00 each and in view of this first ripple of re-action by local residents, it would appear we need have no fear as to getting back the money invested in them. Only autumn will reveal if they have any success with out of town visitors, but the assurance that the initial cost will be covered is sufficient news to make us not regret this attempt at recording Natchitoches Parish history on porcelain.

I saw May Balthazar at the store yesterday and invited her to drop by Yucca where I presented her with a plate and made the most of the opportunity to lay a couple of foundation stones for the sale of the Grandpere item, showing her the sketch and getting her reaction. She liked it and said she felt sure all her kin folk would want Grandpere when he makes his bow. Now that the little shadow regarding disposal of the original investment begins to fade, all that remains is my gratitude to you for the fun we have had in contriving this business, so unimportant in itself, so vital in the bonds it has tightened.

The sky is cloudless, as it has been for the past 24 hours, but somewhere an electrical disturbance is scrambling the ether waves and I have no idea, in consequence, as to what has been cooking up Chicago way.....

5588

Sunday, July 27th, 1952.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that the photographs came through but in perfect order, the envelope as straight as a string, not even the corners frayed and the contents, naturally altogether in perfect order.

And didn't the prints come out wonderfully. I am so happy to have them and have blessed you a billion times since their advent.

I chanced to be at the Post Office when the postman arrived, and opening them immediately, I inserted one of the prints of Grandpere's plate in another folder, addressed it immediately and dropped it in the mail, so it undoubtedly reached Mrs. Holloman on Saturday afternoon about 3 o'clock, and if she is as smart as I hope she is, she, in turn, shuttled the thing off to the Picayune which should have it to hand in tomorrow's post.

If Daisey in the Dell doesn't have any luck with her Dallas Morning News article, - and I must say I don't think it worth much, - I shall make use of one of the new prints to send along to Mary Dagget Lake, writing an article that she can use in submitting the piece to the Worth Worth paper. Helen will perhaps be able to use one for the Waco Times Herald, and in a couple of months, Mrs. Holloman can use one in the Alexandria Town Talk, either in connection with a piece about the plates or possibly in connection with religious news concerning plans being made for the centenary celebration of St. Augustin's.

It was so generous of you to send such a bountiful supply and as I make use of each piece, I shall be thinking of how much you silently figure in that word on the plates, "contrived".

The week end was again both hot and hurly-burly. All the Henrys were here and Raynie in the hospital was manifesting all kinds of signs of energy, flying up and down the corridors and generally disporting himself. It's wonderful what the mind does over matter, and from two or three sources I gather he is no better physically and that his recovery is impossible.

8822

5589

From quite an unexpected quarter came this bit of news:

Ben's mother and his fiancée drove down to Natchitoches from Fort Worth to see him. I did not see him at the big house at supper last night or dinner to day, since I suppose he was at the hotel. After all the Henrys had departed, however, along about 3, Ben and all came to see me. Conversation was of little interest until he casually remarked that yesterday at Sam Tobin's store up the road, a salesman, in looking over some money he had just received in payment from the new owners of the store, he mentioned a fifty dollar check, made out to and endorsed by one Clementine Hunter, - and it was either from Look or Life. I suppose the check had been cashed in the store, and the store had paid a bill with it. I haven't the vaguest notion what it is all about, but assume it may have something to do with the recent visit of one Clarence Laughlin, but however that may be, what I am glad about is the fact that Clementine got fifty golden schmackers.

And then from one of my Red River friends whom I see about once in a blue moon, I learned that little Miss Emma-lee "done got her marriage license with that Jackson boy what lives up the road las' week". I saw little Miss Emma-lee yesterday, per her daily schedule, but nothing was mentioned about wedding bells. I believe she is 15. I'll cross the next secretarial bridge when I come to it, but I hope my "informant" may be wrong, for one thing about Emma-lee, she can read.

Dr. Rand came this afternoon, and it is only co-incidental that while he was here, the daughter of la Montespan came in company with a colored servant. I exuded a few words of charm on the boiling gallery and then re-joined Dr. Rand.

The General came by to spend a couple of hours with me this morning. He liked the pot and said it was the largest of its type he had ever seen. As I recall that article by Judge White which I may or may not have sent you two or three years ago, the five sizes are the "grand", "flambeau", "cyrop" something or other and "batterie", and I believe this is the flambeau, with la batterie in the role of St. Giggins' fountain.

The General was delighted to see the photographs of the plates and the photography was so excellent on Grandpere's that he could readily read it without his glasses.

After dinner I had a little chat with Joe and Pat. The latter told us he had been engaged in Special Services activities in the Baton Rouge area during the past week. He says the Government feels there are lots of dangerous Communists at large in the country, especially in the great urban centers.

I need not mention the pilgrims which were of no interest and I can skip a health report, for I'm feeling fine. I hope you can say as much and guess just a little how much your kindness in sending the prints means.....

5590

1822

Monday, July 28th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Hot-hot, and everybody's health seems to be on the up and up, including Laynie, with only old Uncle Lewis a casualty of the week end frolic at the local honkey-tonk. Uncle Lewis lives in a little shack hard by the gin, was born in 1873, is the father of Victorine Johnson who went to jail for a while along about 1940 for having killed a hill billy in a local salon.

I reckon Uncle Lewis, something of a philanderer, got into a mix up with a younger man over the attentions of some lady. It is said Uncle Lewis cut the younger man's throat pretty badly while Uncle Lewis got thumped on the back of the head with a coke bottle and on the eye with perhaps the same sort of instrument. Be that as it may, he spent the night flat on his face in the cotton patch just behind the bamboo hedge of the White Garden, and this morning Celeste was delegated to take him to town to have the lady doctor work on him. She says he will probably lose one eye, but even so, there is probably sufficient gleam in the other to do him alright.

As was to be expected, in view of the report that Emma-lee was getting married yesterday, she didn't show up at her appointed hour today, and so I must begin casting about for someone to take her place. I still marvel that in this vast neighborhood, dotted with various things called schools, so few people can actually read although many of them attain high school status. I assume the teachers simply pass the pupils along to get them out of the way.

interruption, --had to telephone for a doctor to attend a pregnant mother of 16, be-set by what her husband described as "high blood" meaning, I suppose, that she has a fever.

During the past 24 hours I have been heartened by the remarks of two commentators whose opinions reflected admiration for both the Republican and Democratic candidates. Knowing nothing about Mr. Stevenson, I am glad to learn that he is possessed of an intellect, for it was only too true, as one of the commentators remarked, that usually the electorate has had to choose between two numb-skulls, or at best, not more than one candidate had anything much suggesting an intellect, the rare exception in our times being the race between two such men as Charles Evans Hughes and Woodrow Wilson, wherein both gentlemen were possessed of unique intellectual equipment.

0022

5591

I got my reading machine back today, Mrs. Coombs taking time out from her office to dash down here with it between jumps. Although I had pilgrims, I parked them long enough to test the machine and to inquire after the house of Coombs, which seems to be doing alright.

One of Grandpere's descendants is Mrs. Coombs' house servant and when she first saw the Melrose plantation plate, she examined it carefully, declared it was a history of her people and asked if she might some night take home the item and show it to her people. She said if it were possible for her to ever obtain one, --she hoped Mrs. Coombs might intercede for her, --she would be willing to pay any price asked. Mrs. Coombs told her she hoped to see me today, and tonight the girl, I feel sure, will know that it is possible for her to own a plate.

Another reaction of color, --this time negro, came to me yesterday morning when Clyde Claude Emmett Davis passed this way early in the morning to deliver some message from the store. He said he had heard colored folks talking the night before at the honkey-tonk about the plates I had made but as he had never seen them, he wondered if it would be possible. I showed them to him. His sole interest was in the Melrose plantation one. He asked if I would ever have an extra one to sell, as he would like better than anything else to send one to his mama who lives in Houston. He said he knew she would like it and what was more he knew that all the colored folks from Cane River now living in Houston would be mighty jealous of what his mama got in the package he was fixing to send her, come next pay day. He named off some of the people, Nathaniel Brew, his wife, Erna and so on, and said he was going to get me to write a card to go with the plate, telling him mama not to let anybody more than look at it, for he knew well enough that some of those people would break down when they saw the old home and most of them, once they got their hands on it, would never let go and his mama would be out a plate.

The General and Junior S. G.'s got their gift of a plate each a week ago last Sunday and I have heard nothing regarding same, either written or oral.

I am sending out very few but of course one will go to Briarwood, Dora, Daisey in the Well, the Campbells of North North and so on and Hobina and a few others a little later. And speaking of the Campbells, I wonder what ever happened to them, for their initial letter was so nice. Perhaps the heat or the conventions got them.

So spins out the day and a dull letter. But it has been a happy day because I have frequently referred to the photographs and blessed little Miss Lee for everything nice coming my way.....

0022

5592

Payne's death

Tuesday, July 29th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And what a surprise, --not thirty billion times of trying to express it in some suitable fashion would adequately satisfy the Arenbourg birthday token in this morning's post.

And how sweet of little Miss Lee to have in mind sharing a windfall from South of the border. And in view of the size of the Arenbourg item, I am holding the thought that the windfall itself may have been upwards toward a million.

The plate carton came through as safely as one, two, three, and I must confess that I hadn't the vaguest notion as to what it contained. Vaguely I thought of glossy prints but all of those had come through. On the gallery of Yucca I opened the package and my surprise increased when I saw the three or four in square package within the larger one of a foot in measurement at least. Then out tumbled old Dr. Underwood's decoration, and with it the Arenbourg item, and I was what might be styled in all truth, -- floored.

How nice, nice, nice, and as to what purpose it shall be put, only you who know the local set up so perfectly can appreciate. But more of that anon.

For no particular reason, and certainly by nothing suggestive of a hunch, I was up and doing a half hour before dawn this morning. I felt as though I wanted to put the house to rights and I hadn't done much since Sunday. I turned the house inside out, or at least had all the moveables on the gallery before sun up, and long before breakfast the rugs had been beaten, the floors scrubbed and everything back in its accustomed place an hour before Andy arrived to help me with some gardening.

At breakfast, Eugene said Payne was getting tired of the hospital but remained about the same physically.

An hour or so later when I was momentarily at Yucca, Archillius Brown, Jr., came to say two things, -- first that Mr. Payne had died, and second that he needed a little shot.

He got it.

5593

Then came Beau Mack, asking if he could talk with me a few minutes about his daughter, Emma-lee. He could. He said she is 14 and had promised him on Saturday she wouldn't get married, but had broken her word on Sunday and participated in tying the knot, although neither he nor Juanita knew about the event until long after it was over. He said he had told her on Saturday she probably never would have another chance like being a secretary to a white man and that if she kept up her school work, learning both at school and in her secretarial work, she would get along fine in her studies and that he and his sister would see to it she got through college. But marry she would. What he wanted to ask me was what I thought about him going to see her, --her husband, 19, also a student, lives up there, and telling her again about finishing her school, and asking her to come to talk with me about it if she didn't think colored folks had any sense about such things. I told him I should be glad to talk with her if she cared to come by to see me. He said he would see to it that she did before the week ran out.

Plantation activities came to a full halt immediately on receipt of the news of a death in the family. But the store remained opened, as the store must, since the Post Office is inside the store and the Post Office must remain open. Then, too, today is some kind of an election thing, and one of the polling places is at Melrose, the booths being in the garage just next to the store.

As for the Henrys, I saw none of them today, except J. A. and Pat at supper, for just the three of us were on the plantation, the rest having gone straight to Natchitoches, I suppose, where the funeral will take place tomorrow afternoon.

It goes without saying that this Memo and possibly tomorrow's may be a little late in reaching your true hand, should the post here be a little out of joint on the morrow, in view of all the doings.

Had you been here for supper, we would have had fun, for J. A., after a busy day, was in a relaxed, cheerful mood and Pat was busy talking about his plans for Germany. I believe he heads out for Wiesbaden in September and as he is taking a car with him, he will probably get around quite a bit. And being in the special services branch, he will wear civilian clothes but will be able to buy his gas at the Army base at 13 cents per-gallon, as opposed to 60 cents in the usual commercial places.

All this I write in the dark, as the lights were cut just as I began. Do hope you can make it out, but all that is important is that your Arenbourg surprise today has produced a glow in the neighborhood of the heart that will linger on and on.....

5594

Wednesday, July 30th, 1952.

Memorandum:

This won't be much of a letter because the day has been long and hot and humid.

Plantation work, of course, continued suspended and although at the last moment the plans were changed and Paynie was taken directly to a Natchitoches Funeral Home, still there were lots of people passing this way during the morning, and everyone was milling around in that manner which inevitably accompanies the hours when no one has anything to do and yet the schedule still stretches far ahead before the final ritual is performed.

J. A. came over to Yucca early to ask me to go to town with him and Celeste and with Betty Regard Courager and her husband who were coming for the funeral.

Later Sister, whom, it seems, together with her husband, had spent the night at Melrose, came and asked me to go with them in their car. I declined and the reason infuriated her. Perhaps I shall not see her for a while, but that suits me alright.

We went to the funeral home about 2 and went through that endless business of viewing the corpse and sitting about and talking in subdued tones to people we seldom see or have never met before. Mrs. Stephen Garret of New Roads whom I had never met before was especially kind and urged me, both before and after the funeral, to come for a long visit at their home on False River.

The funeral cortege moved from the Funeral Home to the Baptist Church, several blocks away, and a simple but satisfying service followed, lasting about half an hour, after which we all went to the cemetery where the service didn't last more than 5 or 10 minutes. After that there were lots of people to be spoken to, some of whom I knew and some I didn't. Of course Blythe was there and I said "owdy, and I know Dr. Rand and Ed were there too but I didn't chance to see them.

1822

5595

Pat scampered back to Barksdale immediately and I believe the S. G. s returned at once to Baton Rouge. The Courageres came back here and Keith came over to see me for a little chat while Celeste and Adam Regard were entertaining some South Louisiana people who had just chanced to drop in, bringing with them one of Celeste's old friends, a native of Cuba, whom Celeste has visited in that island, I believe.

Supper was for but four, Dan, Joe, Ben and I or perhaps me. Anyway it wasn't much for the newly wed was in his cups and inclined to be disagreeable. And that was the day.

But I found Lee waiting for me when I reached home and we glanced through a couple of bits of mail, but not much. There was a letter from the Associate Editor of the Ricayune, saying the Editor, Mr. Ogeden was expected back at his desk, following a heart attack, within the next few days and would advise regarding the article.

There were films from Mrs. Holloman, which I assume are some of those taken here recently. I am curious to know about one, - which I asked to be taken so that it would include only one panel of the screen at which I am working, and showing the decorations on the wall behind me to advantage. I have no doubt that some of these films are worthless or of scant interest, and so it might not be a bad idea to have them printed small to determine which are of any account. Perhaps you can tell by looking at the films themselves, but that isn't possible for me to judge.

For some unknown reason, the post man was an hour in advance of schedule this morning and so I simply held out the mail and will accordingly post yesterday's Memo with this.

I am thinking about a photographic thing to be entitled

"Congo Shadows Along Cane River" which I should like to have Caroline photograph but which I shall not consider, since she is so undependable. But it might be something Mrs. Holloman could struggle with, since she at least is nearer to hand and already has rounded up quite a few interesting photographs recording the Congo tinge that has deepened the pigmentation of some of the local citizens.

But of this and other points, we shall speak at subsequent sittings. Again my thanks on behalf of the Arenbourg surprise, and blessings on you.....

Chas. Cunningham 7/29

Dec Harzog 7/28

5596

Thursday, July 31st, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your grand week end letter in today's post.

It is so pleasant to know we both had the opportunity to listen to the same programs coming out of Chicago. You asked which station I listened over, and in response I must say I struck pretty close to the Columbia system, --Shreveport KWKH and New Orleans WWL. Someone has subsequently mentioned how interesting Elmer Davis was and once I myself caught a few sentences of E. V. "Kattleborn", but somehow my inclination took me to the Columbia system, perhaps because I thought Bob Trout was doing a good job and also because I liked it on a couple of occasions when Ed Morrow set forth his observations.

I believe Mutual has some good commentators, too, and I like Elmer Davis, --I believe he is with Mutual, and I like Martin Legronski, but all in all, Columbia seemed to draw my attention most.

It goes without saying I am delighted that L. J. got away for a couple of days rest between jobs, and isn't it grand that your efforts in behalf of the new situation proved so successful. Do be sure to let me know how she finds it, after the first week or two of the confusion that goes with every job has passed. I think of her so often and find myself holding the thought that all will run along so smoothly.

I hadn't heard of the Rogers film and was glad you mentioned it. I was glad, too, that you could get a glimpse of the Chicago doings over television. As I have never seen this new contraption, it is still all a little hazey and wonderful to me, although I have heard all about the appearance of the machine, the types of programs, etc. We aren't supposed to be in an area equipped for television reception, but several people in town have them, and even the household of the late Hyman Cohen down the road is sporting one, and reception seems to be pretty good, although atmospheric conditions here seem to make a considerable difference, and perhaps it is so all over.

5597

I am glad to have your impressions of Governor Stevenson. Reports from various sources, radio and personal, seem to be universally favorable. J. H. whose vote has long been for the Republican Party, tells me Stevenson did some good work for one of the Federal agencies with which he was associated, perhaps R. E. A. He said a while back, perhaps a few years, Stevenson was scheduled to address a meeting of representatives of the several agencies scattered through the country at a convention in Chicago but, he regretted, he had missed the Stevenson speech. Little more than a sixth sense impells me to believe that both men are alright for the job, which ever party is successful, and that in itself is wonderful. Counting out the Byrds, one somehow feels the Democrats are a little more on the liberal side and for that reason, one's inclination turns in their favor. Surely Eisenhower has the big name and it will be interesting to see what Governor Stevenson can do about projecting his own theories and personality into the consciousness of the electorate as between now and November.

Today's post was fairly heavy and I shall simply grab at a couple of enclosures and send them along, even though they may turn out to be of scant interest. An exception is that in the case of Charles Cunningham whose letter you will enjoy because it refers to how he received the plate. I telephoned his office immediately on receiving the letter and gave him the desired information, which, if the paper had not already gone to press, will give it all that advertising could offer. I thought it very kind of him, and shall write and say as much, for he was not in when I telephoned.

In view of the obituary notice that will appear in this forth-coming issue of the Times, I hope the plate will not appear until the following issue, and yet, if it does, perhaps a lot of people reading it for the obituary, will find the picture of Melrose Plantation plate of added interest.

I have no doubt the Grandpere original has been received by Rock Hall, but I haven't heard from them as yet. I suppose they may delay writing until they can advise me the balance of the Cane River Country item has been forwarded, thinking I might prod them a little about the latter, since only partial shipment was made within the scheduled six week period.

Now for a little reading about Washington, --I am at the place where he is directing affairs from Jumel Mansion, and thence to the radio and the close of a day made doubly pleasant by little Miss Lee....

5598

Memorandum:

How nice to find your gay five o'clock letter of Monday in today's post. There was a flock of other mail which remains unopened, --none of it of any moment, but naturally if time pressed, I had to read at least one, so it was easy enough to choose.

Your note simply bubbled over with gaiety and did my soul good, and I laughed aloud at the mention of the Three Saints, for instantly I recalled the title of a musical thing, contrived by one Gertrude Stein in conjunction with one Nichols, perhaps, and instinctively I pictured Estan in the midst of all that excitement that went on behind the footlights in that remarkable production.

I'm so glad you liked the pot and the pictures. I was fiddling with a tiny butterfly that had rested on the leaf of a water hyacinth which made it appear that I was pointing to the pale purple flower of the hyacinth a little further along. By now the films covering these three photographs and a few more have reached your true hand. It is doubtful if any of the others are anything to bother about, and should you have them developed out of sheer curiosity, I recommend that you have the small size prints made to you can determine if they are any good or not. Because I have a feeling the photographer never could understand what I was driving at when trying to get nothing in the background save the strange instruments on the wall, I presume they were not included in the picture in their entirety. But if they are, perhaps the film could be cut around the edges a bit and so get itself properly centered. If you would care to keep the films, you may. If convenient, however, it might be well to keep them in a group by themselves just in case they should ever be required for anything else, such as possible use in some other connection in some other publication than the Picayune.

I listen to radio reports about the drought in the South, and am glad, thanks to F. D. R. legislation, the farmers are able to get Federal loans on food for their cattle whose pastures have been parched by the drought. And it seems so odd that Mississippi, for example, should be in such a situation, for our next door

5599

negibhro to the East, --and after all, it is only 150 miles to the Mississippi River, it seems so odd Mississippi should not have received much of the same well spaced rainfalls we have had this season. Last night it sprinkled nearly all night, slow, gentle and thoroughly dampening the ground, and so many little local showers have passed this way lately, it does seem as though we might have shared some with regions than needed them so much more.

Before this, I guess I should have referred to the enclosure. The miracle on the front gallery ocured this afternoon along about 3:30, when this first bu terfly lily of the season unfolded. During the week end there will probably be several, and I shall send them to various peoples, like Dora, Madam Marco and the like, remarking they are "among the first", but where the first one flitted is nobody's business but little Miss Lee's and mine.

I should like to keep the record straight regarding the matter of the investment in the plates, for I know you will be interested to know that, thanks to three orders today, I was able to retire a hundred dollars on the money borrowed to pay Rock Hall in advance. I am under the impression the impending publicity may easily float us over the outstanding balance due. On her behalf, a friend of Miss Kate Perkins brought one check for 30 dollars from her one for 50 from another friend of hers and one for twenty from a third. I hadn't seem so much money in a long time, but it was pleasant to get rid of it immediately with the knowledge that by so doing the plate balance was moving in the right direction.

At first dark, Frances Henry with her mother came down to say Bowd to Celeste, and I dropped by for a moment. She seems as gay as a cricket and wants to come to see me one day next week with a view to getting me to help her compose an expansive notice for Houston and Dallas papers, wherein she will list her Napoleonic and Louis Phillipe furniture from "the collection of the late Lyle Saxon, celebrated Louisiana author", for, in reality, she did buy Lyle's Royal Stree apartment things about 20 years ago. I returned to Yucca just as the moon was taking over the heavens, and passing through the iris garden and "avant-cour", I saw the pot in moonlight for the first time, --we have had so many cloudy nights of late, --and found it just as elegant as in full daylight.

In spite of the excessive humidity, the pilgrimage business was brisk today, --with New Orleans, Dallas and Jacksonville, Florida being represented. Oddly enough, the Jacksonville people, coming on a recommendation from Dr. Kyser of the college, recognized the name of Dr. Samuel Royall Morris when I mentioned it, as being acquainted with the widow. It turned out that the mother of a 16 year old youth remembered the late doctor quite well as he had been her physician when the boy was born. Well, so things turn, and the day has been a happy one, and especially because of your gay letter....

dis. Storm - view of
Mt. Shasta
King Rand note
5600

Sunday August 3rd, 1952.

Memorandum: Even before opening this letter, you have of course observed that I am herewith making use of the gift you forwarded for old Dr. Underwood. Frankly, I should have made use of it a day or two back, but plantation operation side tracked hands capable of "threading" the typewriter, as the putting on of a new ribbon is locally described. Perhaps in Tuesday mail I shall have a page from the Natchitoches Times for your true hand. I haven't seen the paper as yet but I am told that the plate was given preferential position and that the Parish is manifesting interest in this news item covering a subject about which many people had never heard. The same Dr. Beau Mack came to see me early this morning, asking me if I would write a letter for him to his daughter, urging her to finish her current school term, even though married. After he had started to leave, he turned back at the gate and said he wanted to tell me how proud his wife, "Y-nita" was to own the plate which I had sent her. He said she had found a special box for it and wrapped in tissue paper, she keeps the plate in the box, in the back of the top drawer of her "chiffer-robe". He says whenever anybody comes to the house, she gets into the "chiffer-robe" and brings out the box and unwrapped the plate and lets the visitor look at it, but that she always insists on standing or sitting close in front of the guest so that she can keep her hand under the plate for, as she declares, to avoid "I ain't never goin' to have anything like that again in this life, and I ain't goin' to get it broke".

I find it touching that such a trifle should somehow stand for so much in the hearts of these simple folk.

5601

From the attached note, you will gather I called on Madam
Regard this afternoon, her daughter having gone to a wedding at
the Cathedral in town. On Saturday Sa Majeste, by personal visit,
had indicated a desire on the part of la Montespan to honor Yucca
forthwith, but some kind of a flare-up as between them, deflected
the latter from realizing her wish. With this in mind, when I
made a round at Yucca and found a message had been written on
my note, I did not think it wise to carry it back with me when
I was scheduled to break bread across the fence an hour or so later,
supposing the message might have been penned by a feminine hand,
and so it was not until much later tonight when a chance visitor
passing this way, bent on heading toward a frolic at the local
henkey-tonk, that I learned the identity of my afternoon visitor.
The rather heavy mail of recent date has resulted in a fine
mix up of stuff to be unscrambled eventually, and I regret I don't
seem able to discover a rather amusing letter of thanks from
Juanita Henry of Conroe, Texas, wherein she remarked that Joe
had brought her the Cane River Country plate and that she liked
the finished product even better than the preliminary sketch which
she had seen when last here. Now Lee was the secretary to
read this letter, and Lee has a way of half spelling long words and
taking a chance at tossing off the right word when the latter is
short. Naturally this often leads to so mighty strange interpreta-
tions by the time I get the long words finished in their spelling
and converting the mis-pronounced as order ones. And a good case
in point is the way he dished out Juanita's phrase, for, after
partially spelling preliminary, he went back, and with a running
start plunged through to the end of the phrase, so that it came out:
"I like the finished product even better than the pre-
liminary chicken." To paraphrase a line from Winston Churchill's speech before
Congress sometime during the war: "Some chicken." Some chicken.
On the rumor mart, the latest information which appears to have
a firm basis for truth, the Crescent City has become the permanent
home of the Spring bride, so that the answer to the old popular
tune, so much a favorite of the late Mayor Jimmy Walker, --
"Will you Love me in December as you did in May" is definite in
the negative.

The heat continues but the moisture is adequate and vegetation
flourishes. The radio spoke of rain in your area on Saturday. I hope
it helped rather than hindered the realization of a quiet week end....

5602

Robina 8/1/52
D.D 7/31
5602

Monday, August 4th, 1952.

Memorandum: How nice to find your Tuesday-Wednesday letter in
this morning's post. I am indebted to you for no end of things on which to ponder
and on which I can round out the passing scene.

How characteristically nice of you to think of our
mutual friend beyond the Rhine as an undying flame, even though
on occasion it appears, through lapse of time, to be nothing much
more than the embers. But the fact that a gust from who knows
what direction re-kindles the flame, and it is so heartening to
know it burns brightly once more.

I like the idea of rolling a couple of plates in her
direction, if shipping doesn't involve too much excitement and
if you feel the presence of a certain name on one of them might
cause even greater excitement, by some strange turn of
the wheel of Fortune, some person or persons, vaguely remembering
the name, might make more out of the business than seems probable
off hand at the present time. It is naturally of little Miss
Lee and her happiness I am thinking, and I leave it to little
Miss Lee, who understands all the ramifications better than anyone
else, to decide. Whatever the decision, I am all poised to
forward another set to 908, so that your own stock may not be
reduced.

So just let me know your decision, and I shall be guided
accordingly. As between this paragraph and the above, it occurs to me
that a sharp knife might effect the scratching out of the
two words following "Contrived, 1952". If so, then it
seems to me all question about sending them would be automatically
removed and the subject matter detailed in the design would
carry a sufficient clue as to the identity of the "contriver".

So far as I am concerned, I should be delighted to have them roll
just as they are, but only that one little cloud of doubt
is to be considered and disposed of as seems best to you. I
imagine, frankly, that such a gift might really stand for
a little bit in the heart of the recipient, since they might somehow
see a symbolize a segment of happy days, once glimpsed in part and
probably often longer for as something to be attained in the future.

5603

And may I thank you for giving me particulars regarding Mr. Secorby's latest activities. Long have I felt it well that the American Foundation should get him to reading the better things, since I have instinctively felt his services would all too soon be unavailable. That is one reason why I have frequently pressed Library of Congress to record the balance of the better books, the initial volumes of which he has put into wax. I felt this especially in regard to the balance of the volumes of little Marcel's "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu", of which, so far as I know, he has thus far read but "On the Swanny Side of the Street". Let us hope Hollywood doesn't appropriate him exclusively for its own use at the expense of the American Foundation.

If the original pictures, taken by Mrs. Holleman are not too vast and cumbersome for your convenience, do keep them by all means. Subsequent to the posting of your letter, the original films have come to your true hand, I suppose, and by having small prints made, you can readily decide if any of those beside the three which passed through my hands to you are worth anything, and can be guided accordingly. I haven't given the matter any thought and can't think of anyone in particular who would be interested in any of them, save possibly a picture of the pet for Madam Rand's mother, Mrs. White and possibly one or the other of either the St. Giggimor rather the Blessed Martin and perhaps the screen for someone like Dora or Helen Baldwin or Madam Marge. Today's post was heavy again and much of that from Saturday remains pretty much as a jumble in my mind, what with the secretariat still more or less out of kilter so that only what seems to me of primary importance even getting opened. I ran through what seems to have been a very kind letter from Daisy in the Dell, thinking it might refer to the Dallas Morning News, but it turned out to be not a business note but a sweet letter from a soul which is certainly floundering about in a world to which, I imagine, she is unable to adjust herself. There was an endless one from Mrs. Holleman, all of which I have plumed as yet, but I did discover that Ricayane practice was still on the dilatory side. I hope the Watchtowers Times item doesn't come to their attention before the Magazine Section has printed the thing. You were so perfectly right about the thing I was holding against the screen, a hand made iron spike which, foolishly, I thought might pass as a big soft pencil, but the camera was too good and, if printed, will prove to the world I must have lost my mind, trying to draw with an iron spike.....

Lady Lake 8/1/52
Caroline Danner 8/1

5604

Tuesday, August 5th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The mails continue heavy and the weather hot and humid. The nightly dews are heavy and what with the abundance of such moisture, weighting down every leaf and stem, the foundation for today's initial air plane dusting of the cotton at dawn made a perfect beginning for the seasonal fight on boll weevil, but pretty devastating, too, on birds and smaller animals, I fear.

Air planes have been dealing out their deathly dew on other plantations up and down the river, but today's visitation at this bend of the river was the first.

It would seem as though the neighboring feathered friends must have sensed what was up, for, contrary to custom, none of them showed up on the galleries this morning until nearly 10:30. Where they had secreted themselves, only they could tell. I put fresh water in the several bird baths and those spots seemed to be the most popular gathering places for a variety of songsters, although none of them felt moved to do much more than chirp or twitter.

It will be a while before somebody comes out with some reliable study of what effect all this dusting and spraying has on furled and feathered friends and what the eventual effect is on the human economy. I suppose one reason why the cat and pole-cat, --versus the rodent population, is and has been so out of balance during the past several years. The chain is endless when one starts speculating, --for in the wake of the dusting plane there are no insects, which means there are no birds, and there are fewer rabbits, cats and pole cats and perhaps a larger proportion of rodents, but still the number is so reduced momentarily that the reptiles lack food and search for less civilized regions, while the fruits and grains, dependent upon polinization, come to a halt for lack of agents in the insect world to perform their appointed tasks. It's really quite a whirly-gig and I, for one, propose worrying my head not at all in trying to figure whence the road leads. After all, an inquiring mind is one thing, but too frequently people spend too much time going into the nth degree on such matters, as for instance, such a brilliant man as Thomas Jefferson bothering to figure out precisely how much an individual cup of tea served at Monticello cost. After all, he was going to pour tea to hordes of people as long as he lived anyway, so it does seem silly to have bothered figuring out the individual amount involved in each separate cup.

5605

A letter from the Picayune to Mrs. Holleman, which I have returned to her, indicates that the article will be published as soon as the present somewhat crowded schedule has been taken care of. "Several weeks" were the words used, and let us hope that during those several weeks the Picayune doesn't run the risk of having a fit by stumbling over the Watchtowers Times as of last Friday.

I saw the ladies across the fence this afternoon. Madam Regard gets around much as usual but I notice little signs of tiredness which I trust are only that. Celeste said she thought she would drive her Mother to Alexandria tomorrow afternoon, on the theory the outing would be good for her, and besides she herself had in mind doing some shopping. Out of doors the thermometer is in the 90's, while inside their air conditioned menage it remains static around 70 or 72.

Celeste also mentioned that in the beauty shop the other day she glanced at the Woman's Home Companion and discovered the first installment of Barnett Kane's life of Beatrice Fairfax or rather Dorothy Dix, since, after all, if memory serves, the Kane biography is about a woman, and if memory serves further, Beatrice Fairfax was in reality a man.

Some of Dee Hertzog's people from Chenyville, --below Alexandria, were here today. One lady, perhaps in her 60's, told me she is going to talk with her mother in a day or two and pass along the notes she makes on a slave-prince they had in their family. His name was Timbo or Timbuck, and, during the disorders of the Civil War and Reconstruction, he always spent the night in a downstairs drawing room, his gun along side, to protect the ladies of the family, sleepy above stairs, while all the male members of the family were away. He had one daughter, Virginia, who died about 20 years ago. The Machez Priene of Jalen was possible because slaves prior to 1800 were brought from Africa direct, but it seems remarkable there should have been any such still active during the Civil War period. We shall eventually see what there is to all this, if anything.

I must stir about in my basket and see if I can't find an enclosure or two, for things are really tending to pile up. Hope I can find the one from little Miss Dorman, for it is both nice and typical. A telephone from the Drug company in town indicates much interest in the merchandise being currently displayed by that organization but I didn't inquire if anything more than polite interest was being shown; but I assume a few numbers must be rolling. And so I fold, still happy as a clam over your nice letters of yesterday and the day before.....

Mrs. Williams 8/5-
Cl. Laughlin 8/3

5606

Wednesday, August 6th, 1952.
Memorandum: A letter from the Picayune to Mrs. Holleman, which I have returned to her, indicates that the article will be published as soon as the present somewhat crowded schedule has been taken care of. "Several weeks" were the words used, and let us hope that during those several weeks the Picayune doesn't run the risk of having a fit by stumbling over the Watchtowers Times as of last Friday.

The mails continue rather heavy but the heat has slackened this afternoon and tonight, thanks to a nice little shower during the afternoon. I shall try to find the Laughlin letter and enclose same for your delectation. I have already acknowledged it, giving him the data requested, --in part, --and in answering his request for Mr. Pipes' address, given him that, too, saying that it is my understanding Mr. Pipes could last be reached at 721 North Peters, Norman, Oklahoma, but if that proved to be out-dated, I felt sure the communication would be forwarded appropriately from that point. This will give him the impression, I hope, that Dora and I aren't in brisk communication and will accordingly impell him to write unguardedly about what he has up his sleeve in regard to the Clemence things. In the paragraph that followed, I said: "Rumor has it that certain canyases by Clemence Hunter belonging to me are being published, reproduced in color or otherwise, in a national magazine, but I place no credence in this, as I feel quite certain you would not undertake such a step without receiving my approval in advance."

If Clemence has already received a check, --as she seems to have done, then that means the stuff has already gone into production, and at this late date is probably in print or about to be set forth on the news stands. Mr. Holleman suggested that such a line as noted would undoubtedly give Mr. Laughlin pause. It is interesting to see what, if any, response he makes.

Obviously the fellow writes a polite letter and his spoken words are unfailingly in the same vein but no matter how polite the boa constrictor may be in its approach, that in no way softens its bone crushing propensities.

If I can find Ora's letter, you will like it. Only last Sunday I heard for the first time of the trips which the college has been arranging for years for people, including its students, on jaunts in various directions across the country. As I understand it about 35 people make up a group which travels in an air conditioned bus. All meals and sleeping accommodations are included in the cost of the trip which is somewhere between \$150.00 and \$200.00, and covers about 3 weeks. The group is going to be made up of students and faculty.

5607

Western jaunt which Anne is taking goes through several interesting places in Texas, a dip into Mexico, across the desert country of Arizona and on to Los Angeles, up the Imperial Valley, possibly as far as San Francisco, and back through Yosemite or Grand Canyon and Colorado and so back home. Other trips go to New England, taking in the big Eastern cities and so on. It would kill me to travel with 25 people on such a jaunt of course, but for those who like crowds and aren't too fussy about having to travel by set schedule, this seems to be a wonderful type of trip and wonderfully inexpensive. Celeste has been dreaming up joining one of these, - "it would be so much fun" and I really think she would have the time of her life. I'll travel by one or by two when I travel, but lots of people like a frolic of three weeks in a mess of 30 other frolickers, and this arrangement strikes me as being ideal for them.

The power of the press was manifest today in the arrival of notes from Natchitoches people, asking for a plate, - a total of twelve being received, each for one. It is too early to judge if any of the present purchasers are going to want additional items as gifts, and as many people are out of town and the pilgrimage business through town slow, I still don't have any idea of the things are going to "catch on" or not, but it is heartening to anticipate disposing of all outstanding investment in the matter.

On the home front, I am confronted with a distinctly different problem in the energy of "Polyte", son of Mitchell, the Axe. Polyte presides over the power mower which swishes over the greenswards once of twice a week. Slow motion best describes the majority of lawn mower pushers and that is what makes Olyte so different, for he insists on accomplishing in one day what it usually takes two men to do in two. But while the saving of time is a desirable factor, still the unflinching ability on Olyte's part to cut not only grass but plants as well certainly poses a problem. The Philippine lilies just beyond the stained glass of the Chapel were just coming into their full glory yesterday when Olyte with his power machine whizzed around the bed, sniping off eight stalks in a twinkling. As each stalk supported five or six blossoms, the devastation seemed impressive. It is true there are still standing a number of the same lilies in the same bed, but somehow I feel bound to attach an anchor on Olyte whenever he ventures beyond the big open spaces of the major lawns.

It just occurs to me I might well have assured you before sending the Natchitoches Times clipping that the list of titles appearing in the article represent more of a possibility than an actual program. When in town a week or two back, and after talking with a couple of people, I instinctively felt somebody or other was going to try a hand at pictorial plate making. Hence the endless titles in the article, by way of discouraging any immediate competition, don't

Ida Hazen
5608 8/3

Re: St. Augustin story
for Life.

Friday, August 8th, 1952.

How nice to find your Monday letter in today's post.

I am glad to know three items popped in at 908, all at one fell swoop, giving you a picture of last week's hurly burly. And thanks, too, for letting me know the films came through alright. Mrs. Holloman has said she doesn't need them back, and so, if convenient to you, they might be filed by your true hand. It seems to me we might eventually find use for one or two of the subjects for publicity, but at the moment I can't think in what respect. If Life decides to do the St. Augustin story, then it would seem some reference in picture might be made to the Blessed Martin, to contrast the exclusiveness of the mulatto in the St. Augustin set-up. But if Life does a story, Life will take all the pictures and do the writing besides, although they will probably call on Mrs. Holloman or me to assist in the details. Somehow I have a feeling that some Magazine Section of some newspaper may eventually want to do the St. Augustin business, perhaps sometime between January and June next, and if so, perhaps the film in the present collection, showing the interior of the Chapel, may be of service. There is something so paradoxical about a Chapel for negroes having been contrived under the very roof where Augustin and Louis Metoyer, builders of the St. Augustin Church exclusively for mulattoes that it would seem it is an unusual point in underlining the color differences in this strange set-up.

I invite your attention to the enclosed card and suggest you destroy it once. What is hilarious, of course, is the enthusiasm of the sister-in-law for the newest member of the family who has already been kicked out, and, worst of all, although only three people are supposed to know it, when the kicked out bride is two months along in pregnancy. We have all known various forms of degradation, but somehow this seems to be about the limit in something or other.

The weather remains hot and humid with partial cloud coverage and a promise of scattered thunder showers tonight so I suppose there will be little radio-ing. I spent the morning at Arenburg, discouraging vines and weeds in the immediate neighborhood of the children, and snipping off the first seeds of the crepe myrtles, so they will bloom again this year. They are growing wonderfully and introduce a note of greenery that is delicious.

5609

I saw Zelma at the post office this morning. She had her little granddaughter with her, --Little King's child who seems to be between 2 and 3 years old. She is a dark little girl, with approved bristling perruque and as bright as a button. She pointed to a nice fat watermelon, almost as big as she, and said:

"Mame, --I wants meddow water."

Two things struck me in that declaration, -- first, how so many of my untutored friends twist double words around so, for example, a woodpecker becomes a "peckerwood", and, secondly, I remembered how, when teach King Hunter's boy his Mother Goose, that old like, "The sheep's in the meadow, invariably came out, 'The sheep's in the mud hole..."

This afternoon, although too busy to grant much time willingly, I was glad to see Mary Gumm from Magnolia who came with Robert Deblieux and some youth from Winfield. They are nice youngsters and I always feel the time allotted them couldn't be better invested. What Ora had said in her letter about the young folks at her daughter's frolic came back to mind, and it was so pleasant to be able to add a whole hearted Amen.

Long before now I should have said how kind I think it was of you to send a note of sympathy to the family in pursuance of receiving news of Paynie's death. I reckon it may have arrived in today's post, but I saw the ladies across the fence before they had made a round at the post office, so I reckon I shall hear of the matter on the morrow. The air conditioning over yonder keeps the house at an even 72, --a little shocking when stepping in all a-drip from something over 100, and I incline to entice the people on to the gallery for coffee. Madam Regard is still her kind, kind self, but I see little tell-tale signs of "below par-ism", and I hold the thought this may be but a temporary incident and not a manifestation of the inevitable. My reading machine is out of whack again but probably requires only some slight adjustment to make it perfect again. So far as reading goes, I don't miss it at the moment. I have so many things cooking by way of desk work and gardening, both here and at Arenbourg, but I do miss the opportunity to absorb a little Strauss, Mozart and Tchaikovski now and then, and shall hope to get the thing rigged up again shortly.

Did I mention the laughlin prints came and were just what you might expect, --probably wonderful for fineness of detail but obviously stuff nobody on earth would want to use. As for example, the thing he styled, "Marie Therese's House, was simply a close up of the front gallery, taken from one end, beneath the roof. I gave all three to J. H. Slapp and was glad to be rid of them.....

5610

Sunday, August 10th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Tuesday letter in Saturday's post. Somehow I hadn't expected the postman to bring any mail on Saturday but there was your letter, one from Rock Hall, another from Dora and one from Kenneth de Frees. What with one thing and another, I secured the services of a secretary but momentarily over the week end and so I have made the most of our little chat and let the other things rest until Monday, withal, unopened.

I'm so glad the butterfly lily came through with just the sort of message its fragrance was supposed to transmit. I am so glad to have the instructions for making a jar of their perfume and this year, with their flowering coming so late in the season, I think there ought to be gobs of first rate blossoms to use in contriving the thing. It may be I shall have to do a bit of experimenting before I get the hang of the thing to perfection, for I have no doubt the instructions are based on a supposed average humidity, and as that estate remains rather high in these parts, it is quite probable the moisture element will have to be given special attention. At the moment I am doing all sorts of tricks to keep envelopes and labels from getting hopelessly gummed up before they are put to use. I thought of keeping them near the water heater in the bathroom, but as that stands along side the bath tub which gets lots of use these sticky days, the advantage of the warmth afforded by the heater seems offset by the inordinate amount of steam from the bath. At the moment I have some labels hung on the wire by which the portrait of the Black Swan hangs above my desk. This seems to be a pretty good bet, as the mild heat from the electric bulb generates just about enough dryness to make the glue from coozing.

Saturday morning I was impressed by the convenience of having running water when something or other during the night went hay wire in the well or in the engine that pumps the water, with the result that from 5 a.m. until 2 p.m., all pipes were empty. I was so glad I had put water in the sugar pots for taking off one's beard without water, unless one fiddles with those contraptions known as electric razors, beard cutting is up hill business. I'm sure I've taken up all the time with changes.....

0132

5611

glad the thing didn't play out last week end when there was
so much doings around here. And I'm glad that a watercade is
now available again at the touch of the faucets, for while I don't
feel impelled to spend my life in a shower, still it is pleasant to
know a few drops are available when one feels an inclination in
that direction.

Saturday's conference with Mrs. Holloman turned out so-so.
I had written 8 pages of mulatto business, all pivoting about St.
Augustin's Church and tried to impress on her the importance of
keeping the mulatto business to the fore and keeping Melrose and
Yucca out of the picture. If this can be achieved, the
vaguely potential article to be done as a duet with Carolyn will be
in no way effected. I threw in a few sub-titles such as

"100 Years of Fractious Fair Practices"

which given the general slant of the thing and tossed in a dab
of the Blessed Martin's Chapel for sheer contrast.

Once the idea has been transmitted from New Orleans representatives
to the home office, Life will fly down a photographer or two and
a couple of writers and the game will be on. There isn't any
point in crossing bridges before getting to them, but I feel
instinctively that if the Life people ever get a glimpse of Melrose,
and they can't miss seeing it from the air, the problem will be
to keep them from using it as the tail to wag St. Augustin's or
employing St. Augustin's to wag the plantation, neither of
which will suit my program. But perhaps they won't even accept the
original idea, and so such worries would be useless.

We dined across the fence and an excellent dinner it was.

Pat has a girl friend living in Washington, -- I believe she hails
from West Virginia, and she flew down to Shreveport and I believe
no they drove down here this morning.

Southwest of Hidden Hill plantation, -- see Cane River plate, -- there
lies some 15,000 acres woned jointly by the Estate, Cousin Arthur
Watson and ex-Senator Fredericks. It inclines toward hill land and
has much forest and a lake of about 400 acres where a camp is
about to be erected, some sort of an exclusive thing, it is said, but
I cannot imagine. Whenever I hear the project mentioned, I shy off
in the direction of the nearest "gang of trees", for I don't want
to get tangled up in planning the layout of buildings, park or
drives. Perhaps nobody is dreaming of asking my advice, -- I hope.
But except for J. H. I like none of the people involved and I prefer
attending to our own "children" without going to far afield as to
suggest advantageous plans for such a project. So much more to
talk about but I've taken up all the time with nothings.....

0132

5612

Irma Tucker
8/7

Monday, August 11th, 1952.
How nice to find your letter in today's post. It was
fun talking about pictures and I am glad to know something of
the subject matter they covered, -- those that came out like
something.

Memorandum: The greenery you noticed in front of the pot presented

a problem difficult to solve, so far as the greenery
itself is concerned. Many years ago, perhaps 30 or more
the bag tree, some of whose leaves you have sampled, was
planted there at about the same time the grandiflora was
set out too close to the bay. Both grew well, and just
about kept pace with each other in height. Soon their branches
were entwining, but the cold snap of 1951 killed down the bay
to its huge roots. The big trunk had to be saw down, but I
left the roots because this type of bay is rare in these parts, --
for all I know, its the only one in Louisiana or Mississippi,
and naturally, since the roots were too vast to be moved with
any hope of successful transplanting, I let the little sprouts
that came up remain. Then when the avant-cour was contrived,
there was the sprouting bay, at just about the spot I wanted to
place the pot. I think I shall leave it there for a while until
I try planting another bay if I can find one. Then if that is
established, something can be done about the roots of the old one.

I am convinced that Mrs. Holloman never did comprehend what I
was driving at when I tried to get the Chapel wall and its decors
as the dominant note in the pictures taken on the gallery. But
whatever there is to work on in the original films, I'm sure
by your artful cutting, you will extract a maximum. Between you
and me, I thought the bill of five bucks which I received for the
prints was a bit high, for I had figured the prints might run about
\$1.25 each. Perhaps, on second thought, the sender thought
the bill was a little steep, too, and for that reason threw in
the films, but the Holloman mind, while undoubtedly always one
of integrity, is something I shall never quite comprehend, and
it is quite possible that for the use to which we may eventually
have use of some of the shots, they may turn out to be worth the
original investment.

5613

On reading the enclosure, you will not be at all surprised when I observe that some people are nominated for jobs by conventions while others simply nominate themselves, and I offer the enclosure as a prize example of just that sort of thing. It pretty clearly demonstrates, too, I think you will agree, that la Montespan obviously has aspirations, if not at least in putting on the crown, at least of playing a Maintenon role.

I acknowledged the letter promptly, saying that the only thing I had in mind to hand her the other day was some clippings for which she had asked, and hastened on to observe that Columbus was lucky in hitting the West Indies just after the seasonal blow and not just before, and relating some points I would like to have snapshots of on Jamaica, --the fabulous experimental station, --done, as I have been told, in the best Louis Quatorze style, and some of the prettiest Federal mansions of the 1812 period that one is likely to encounter anywhere. There is some doubt in my mind as to what the lady's concept of a Federalist mansion might resemble, but that's all in the game and it will give her an opportunity to take a gander at no end of stuff when she touches the island.

Celeste and I telephoned Blythe this morning but discovered she had headed out for B. Randolph's up Colfax way, and so we tried again tonight about 7 and found her at home. The reason for telephoning was the fact that today is her birthday and we merely wanted to send along our Howdies. On another front, I learned from Celeste that Frances Henry has started out by car with a girl friend to run up as far as Penland and back on a week's jaunt, although I think they plan to stop in Ashville, although will probably not miss running out to see little Miss Lucy Morgan.

Other chatter from Celeste revealed that at some gathering in town on Saturday, the wife of Senator Fredericks spoke her piece about the plates which came up for discussion and she maintained the community might be expected to rise to the occasion, but in her opinion the State ought to make some gesture of appreciation regarding the originality of the history in porcelain. Imagine. At supper, J. H. expressed himself as finding Pat's girl not pretty and he voiced the opinion she was 8 or 10 years older than Pat. I don't know if she is pretty or not but I did get the impression of maturity, which, to my way of thinking, is all in the girl's favor, for I never was one to measure congeniality in terms of years. I talked with Ora on the telephone, and she threatens to pass this day during her present two weeks vacation. That should afford much opportunity to take up matrimonial topics on a big scale.....

5614

5614

Tuesday, August 12th, 1952.

The enclosure is nothing but I send it along regardless because the group of which the writer was a member was not officially capable of comprehending much but had the courtesy, at least one member did, to take the trouble to write an expression of appreciation.

Memorandum:

And so Celeste said this morning,

"Oh, by the way, I wanted to tell you that the sweetest message the family received following Paynie's death was from 'rna'."

I didn't see the card, but I can well imagine she was speaking the truth and I know she was deeply appreciative. Another laurel leaf for little Miss Lee.

This afternoon a picnic was the order of the day. The place selected for a site was in the Kisatchie National Forest, and those participating in the frolic were the Reverend Fathers across the river, Dr. and Mrs. Ambrose Hertzog from New Orleans and family, and a number of other Cane River Hertzogs, some of the Cohens, I believe, Celeste and a few others from somewhere about the parish. Naturally I declined but I approved of the others going, as though it were any of my business. But it is said the Forest is quite lovely with a stream of clear running water with banks of white sand beneath the trees, and things rigged up for the general comfort of the people who like the place for a sylvian outing. What with the thermometer in the 90's, and the humidity at something over 99, -- there have been tiny particles of water in the air intermittently all day, I reckon some forest glade would be about the next most comfortable place one could find, except an air conditioned house. I laughed to myself whenever I recall how you, even as I, fished around madly in the ether waves, searching for the Eisenhower speech in Los Angeles last week, for I, too, couldn't find the thing which, in reality, wasn't broadcast. It seems strange that in view of all the talk about the impending speech before hand, nothing was done about putting it on the air. I may say at this point that I am impressed by the political straws I grab from the wind, created by passing pilgrims. A month ago I wouldn't have imagined I should hear so many people say they are inclined to believe they will cast their vote for Stevenson. Four weeks back, his name was never mentioned. We shall probably see tide ebbing and flowing in opposite directions many times between now and the 4th of November.

5615

5615

The enclosure is nothing but I send it along regardless because the group of which the writer was a member was not culturally capable of comprehending much but had the courtesy, at least one member did, to take the trouble to write an expression of appreciation.

Today I had a less satisfactory set, --one was Celeste's sister-in-law from Mansura, and perhaps another was her sister, and three 18 year old damsels who might have been wonderful if trying out a new dance floor but so impervious to anything Melrose had to offer that they didn't even bother to stick with Madam Regard who accompanied them, --and at the hour just after the supper bell had rung. They put me in mind of those sweet girl graduates of a few years back who accompanied their professor fathers and their mothers on a Melrose tour, dated long in advance who declared, on arriving that if no body minded they preferred climbing the big oak to seeing the gardens and buildings.

I was rather amused, as you could have been, had you heard what Celeste's sister, --I believe her name is Edna, who had left her sister-in-law at Melrose while she and the young things had gone on to spend the afternoon in town. She said she had called at Mrs. Hill's house, --I suppose Mildred Cunningham's mother and everyone there was talking about some new sort of plates that had a lot of buildings on them, buildings around the neighborhood of Matchitoches, she believed. She said there was a lot of talk about the man who made them, too, and she wondered if I had ever heard of the plates or if by any chance I knew whose idea it was, since everyone there seemed to think both dish and man were important but nobody said why.

I told her I had heard something about some kind of plates a-rattlin' around but what all the excitement was about I hadn't the faintest idea and as for the man who stirred them up, I was positive I had never seen him. Along about then, one of the young fry got tangled up in a rose bush and that conversation was side-tracked before Madam Regard got within ear shot. What I assume is that since people at the Hill home knew the guests were just up from Melrose and probably tossed in the subject of plates as a means of getting conversation going, and yet Edna had never heard of them and never did have the slightest inkling as to the identity of the contrivor. Some day it may or may not dawn on her as to what all the chatter was about, but I suspect she is fairly safe from having the dawn break through too soon.

Think I shall fold early, as my reading machine isn't speaking to me at the moment.....

Robina 8/11
5616

5616

re: article for Life about
St. Augustine

Wednesday, August 13th, 1952.

Memorandum

The weather continues in the 90's and --I continue the gardening at Arenbourg and Melrose. Watering is the big consideration, for although the supply from on high has been sufficient up to now, I like to keep a little ahead of anything suggesting a dry spell ahead, and especially at this season when some of the more temperamental things, like the grandifloras, have a way of getting round to making up their minds to grow about the time the long dry days of August hold the faintest suggestion of approaching autumn.

I have a stack of mail to attend to, but think I shall treat myself to a little chat with you. After that I shall indulge myself in a hot shower and a glass of cold buttermilk, and then we shall see if Dr. Underwood or the old Sandman will win.

The enclosure is of no especial interest but I send it along that you may keep abreast with things. The matter referred to concerns a little hand gin of which I believe there was conversation or perhaps correspondence from the same quarter two or three years ago. I feel Rudolph is the person to act as custodian, for he will appreciate its worth, and will undoubtedly turn it over to the college when he is through with it, and in such an institution it might be preserved as a curiosity, for it is unique in its field, --the only one I ever saw or heard of. I shall not remark in my letter approving the idea that I think it should have been a part of the African House collection where the raw cotton, spinning wheels, looms and so on, including the raw cotton which could have been run through the hand gin for the delectation of those interested might have been effected throughout the year, --and I'll bet Denton doesn't have a boll of raw, unginned cotton, but that is alright. It would seem to me the thing to have done would have been for the lady to lend the instrument to Melrose, with the proviso that should the African House ever be given up as a museum, the item would revert to her, --and the more so, since the outfit originally belonged either to the Madam outright or at least jointly with the correspondent. But there are enough other treasures in the African House, and just so long as the gadget is preserved for posterity, it doesn't

5617

really matter where it finds an ultimate resting place.

From the Crescent City comes word that Mr. Wilds of Life likes the Centenary of St. Augustin story, and as soon as appropriate captions have been knocked off for the illustrations, the pictures and notes will go forward to Life in New York. The latter organization usually takes a month to decide if the material appeals to them. This may be true, so far as their policy to advise their field representative, but when dealing directly with those not associated with their staff, it seems to me it usually takes them much longer to make up their minds. But assuming they approve, then another month or so will elapse before publication date, I expect, and in the meantime, little Miss Carolyn will have had an opportunity to keep her September appointment so that the story of Marie Therese may be jammed through prior to Life publication. If she doesn't keep her engagements, she surely can't complain too much if someone else tears as the fringes of the thing a bit. My idea is to keep the St. Augustin thing strictly contemporary, stressing the present mulatto in habitants and using the plate of St. Augustin purely as an example of the preparations being made for the 1953 celebration. And, of course, if Grandpere could make Life on a plate, that ought to set several plates to rolling. Two big national magazines probably wouldn't bring out stories at the same time on geographical locations so closely identified the one with the other, but I see nothing unethical in not telling each publication that the other contemplates a story about the same River country since actually the one story is about Marie Therese and the other about a community that obtained 200 years later.

I don't recall if I mentioned in Sunday's memo that just before first dark on Saturday, while busy with the butterfly lilies along the front gallery, I was surprised to hear someone say:

"Mr. Francois, --I'm Gillie."

And Lo! there was the Reverend Pompey M. Gillie and wife, -- the latter a cute little rolly-polly of perhaps 60 summers, just as broad as long. They were on their way from home up Cognac way to hold services at St. Augustine's Church on Little River, and said they had seen the article about the plate in the Times, and because they had a plate which they treasured, they wanted to stop off to tell me how much pleasure it had afforded them. And so we found us a big fan and a decanter and chatted for ten minutes, and it was all very pleasant.

But now for the bath and the buttermilk and so to bed....

5618

*vine knife
toe adze*

Thursday, August 14th, 1952.
It was called a toe adze because the laborer measured his chopping by his toe. The trunk of a tree after being cut down was transformed into a table. The laborer would sit on the trunk and the corner of the trunk would be the table. The laborer would sit on the trunk and the corner of the trunk would be the table. The laborer would sit on the trunk and the corner of the trunk would be the table.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Saturday letter in today's post. It contained enough material to keep us busy talking for a sitting that might last a week without interruption.

And may I thank you for passing along the interesting particulars about George Washington. I, of course, had heard nothing about the State paper recently found in the Senate bundle. What a commentary on the times. --A letter calling the Senate into special session by George Washington, penned in his own hand on stationary bearing the watermark of George, the Third. The times were as out of joint in 1791 when it was penned as they were in 1767 or whenever it was the Natchitoches Courts were still using the legal form of "His Most Christian Majesty" whereas "His Most Catholic Majesty" had taken over things years before.

I am so glad you saved the map, too, for that would be as good as a travelogue, following the various trips G.W. made from the 1740's down until the year before he died.

While I think of it, let me answer your question regarding the instruments on the Chapel wall. The upper one, as you assumed, is a vine knife. In this lush region where vines grow with such luxuriance, this type of instrument has always been a prerequisite to plantation operations. The length of the handle is important, for often the vines to be cut are several feet from the nearest point a person can approach, what with thorns and brambles. It also affords one a vantage point of some distance from whatever might be lurking in the vines, and in a region where so many things creeping and crawling flourished in the old days, the length of the handle must have been practice indeed.

The smaller instrument, below the larger, is a relic of the days when Yucca and the African House were built. It is called a toe adze, --although I don't know how to spell adze, but it is something like that. Its iron or steel axe is hand made, and the handle was also fashioned by hand as may readily be noticed in examined. The wood is very dark, looking like mahogany, but I suppose it may be some wood of local habitat, possibly seldom if ever seen any more.

8132

5619

It was called a toe adze because the laborer measured off his chopping by his toe. The trunk of a tree, after being cut and bereft of its branches, was transformed from its natural round state to a timber that was square at the corners, and all the grand old timbers forming the upper story of the African House and all the cypress uprights at Yucca as well as the beaded beams of the ceiling, were fashioned by such an instrument and they still bear the marks of the toe adze, often each mark being not more than 2 or 3 inches apart. As the operator always went barefoot, using his toe to measure how much the adze would chip off at a blow, it paid said operator to judge correctly if he wanted to retain his measuring means. I have no idea how this one every got under the ground beneath the projecting roof of the African House where I found it when removing some old trash and smoothing off the surface around the building. The wood is just as sound as it ever was, although one may see readily enough that one at least, possibly more than once, it was used to stir a bonfire, for the wooden handle near the end where the adze is attached, has been blacked even deeper by the flames. I think it is not a great rarity, but I chance to know of no other in Mississippi or Louisiana, and I treasure it particularly because I assume it was one employed in the days of Marie Therese when Yucca was being created out of the surrounding forests.

And may I thank you for giving me news of how L. J. is progressing in her new situation. Isn't it fine that both ladies concerned with the business are satisfied, and how happy it makes me feel to know how delighted you must be, too, and the more so because of the part you played in "rigging up" the business.

It was nice of you to remember to ask the lady for the name of the manufacturer of the plate. Heaven knows if we shall ever use the information, but it will be nice to have, and if you, too, will retain the name for your own file, I shall feel the more secure, knowing it is available, should I chance to misplace my copy.

I'm glad the article in the Natchitoches paper read alright. Oddly enough, I haven't ever read it. I was in a rush when I ripped it off, as the messenger was waiting to take it, and since it appeared in print, there has been so much "must" stuff to be explored that I haven't found an opportunity to explore the contents. And so I appreciate your findings especially, and Dora wrote that it was alright, too, and I can let it rest until sometime when I have more readers than mail. Naturally I was astonished you found so many other things in the paper, including a reference to Dr. John Kyser, and again I marvel that in all truth, you, sitting 1,500 miles away, know more about the local set up than anyone I know who has spent a lifetime. It has been such a happy day, thanks to your Saturday industry, and again my blessings on you for all the happiness you have contrived for me...

1332

5620

Dora 8/11

Friday, August 15th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Hot-hot with a promise of 105 straight through the week end, and the nights cooling down to 77, which, when considered atop my wool tuck, doesn't seem too cold. But August is half spent and already there is a suggestion of autumn in the uncertain haze "hoovering" over the fields and the rustle of early falling leaves in the gardens.

But the thermometer apparently means nothing to the road runners, for I had them today from Kansas and Iowa, not to mention North Dakota and the District of Columbia, and--of all places, --Mexico.

Around 8 this morning, May Balthazar passed by with her niece who lives somewhere in the East. She wondered if she might arrange a tour for her cousins, born on Cane River, but now living near Camp Meade in the Baltimore area where the gentleman of color is a permanent military fixture, I gather, since he has been in uniform since 1916, which, I should think, ought to entitle him to retirement before many more decades have elapsed.

And so I set the magical hour of 9:30, and a tour of color we had, perhaps 10 or a dozen, and I think everyone enjoyed himself. Two of the ladies, perhaps in their 60's, told me they had spent the major portion of their lives in this section of Cane River but never before had dreamed there were so many interesting buildings and things behind the bushes.

I saw Celeste for a few moments at 11, for a quick cup of coffee before I took on some other people. She started to say something, caught herself, and then went ahead regardless, explaining she wasn't sure if she was talking out of turn or not. It seems she bumped into Editor Cunningham on the street in town the other day and he mentioned his intention, time permitting, to get out the plate article in pamphlet form. I told her not to worry about the surprise this would illicit, should a surprise have been intended if and when the thing comes my way. I think it very kind of Charles to have done this, although he is a civic minded person and perhaps he thought a pamphlet would tend to increase the interest of people in the Natchitoches area.

Celeste was in town today, busy as a bee, making preparations to attend somebody's wedding at the Cathedral tomorrow afternoon, after

5621

which there will be a large reception at the home of the bride. She talked as though I knew about the whole business, and I did know enough with the preparations, and didn't need to inquire the identity of the bride and groom.

On Sunday afternoon, she will take Madam Regard to Mansura and after dropping her, will continue on to Grand Isle for a week or so. Like the lady who headed out Wednesday for the West Indies, I reckon neither one has had a vacation in over a year and a half.

After several days of fairly heavy mail, today's round was impressive because of the absence of anything in the first class section. I reckon I'll be getting a batch on the morrow or Monday. Other delivery service seems to be dawdling, too, for I have the bill of lading on the shipment of Cane River plates that went forward on August 1st, and nothing has turned up as yet. If one could only enlist the road runners to handle the mails and package deliveries, we really ought to experience vast improvements.

Celeste had a bread and butter note from Pat's girl friend, Wanda Cochran. Celeste read it to me without comment, but I gathered she thought the lady lacked facility of expression.

I neglected to say yesterday with how much interest I shall be awaiting a report on how things rocked along during the visit of the Illion contingent, --if, indeed, it ever took place. Let's hope the travelers appeared, --and eventually faded out of the picture again without incident. I guess on of the things in human relations making them most satisfactory is the complete dependability which some people radiate, and the absence of such an element can somehow exhaust everyone concerned before contacts are ever effected. Let us hope everyone was on his best behavior and that a single visit of a day will suffice for ever and ever so long.

I am glad to report that yesterday Dr. and Mrs. Knipmeyer toated the reading machine in to town once more and I expect Mrs. Coombs will have it checked today and will, perhaps, deliver it tomorrow. As you know, the groom of the short lived romance is out to a like pattern as Willie and a decade or so of contacts two or three times a week gives one an experience in such matters that would gladly be skipped altogether.

But tomorrow or Sunday, if there be time, I shall be able to dip into Mr. Washington's doings again and the account of the bitter winter of 'allery Forge ought to balance up nicely against this August heat.....

clipping about
plate given as prize
at Bridge
Lunch
5622

Sunday, August 17th, 1952.

Memorandum: You will perhaps already have read the attached clipping and got a laugh out of it. Celeste cut it out of the Natchitoches Times of this past week, -- Thursday or Friday, I reckon, the 14th or 15th. Apparently at least one customer visited Millspaugh Drug, and, from the use of one word in reference to the gift, it is easy enough to assume it was the Cane River Country item that was selected.

And speaking of Celeste, Pat and I dined across the fence with the family, immediately after which the ladies took off for South Louisiana, and I suppose it will be a week from tomorrow before we see them again. As anticipate, the reading machine, sent into town on Thursday, came back on Saturday afternoon, brought by Madam Coombs. She is under treatment for high blood pressure and I didn't much like the thought of her dragging the thing over the hot roads, but came perfectly, we couldn't get a sound out of it. She said she would take it back to the mechanic and see to it that I got it back before Dr. Knipmeyer's round on Thursday. Picture my humiliation an hour and a half later when appearing on my doorstep was Madam Coombs with the machine, having made the long, hot trip to town and back. It seems there was nothing wrong with the machine, but as neither of us knew anything about the type of guard that had been attached to the needle, we supposed the thing was out of kilter, since no sound was emitted. By simply withdrawing the guard somehow attached to the arm or the needle of the machine, it played perfectly.

At just that moment, Dr. Rand and Horace appeared, and I was glad the four of us could chat a little although Mrs. Coombs had to race back to town again for some appointment.

Dr. Rand must have been doing a little labor on his own hook, since he brought me a message from Mrs. Bowman, saying she would like a few plates if I would care to send them by Dr. Rand. At least this avoids an excuse, were any needed, for la Montespan acting as agent. I hope Dr. Rand handled the Bowman contact with adroitness, and I'm glad la Montespan, at the moment at least, is "all at sea".

5623

2525

Sunday, August 17th, 1952.

In the field of correspondence, it seems to me there has been something of a gap between several points of the compass and Yucca. I guess it has been a couple of weeks since last anything came to hand from la Storm. Perhaps she is continuing her Northwestern trip further North, and is boating on the inner passage from Seattle to --well almost anywhere, perhaps Alaska. It seems long since we have heard from the Harnesses. They are probably lost on the Colorado river, --fishing. I mentioned the other day the shipment of merchandise from Rock Hall, sent on August 1st, had failed to come through. I am under the impression you may have forwarded a photograph or two recently, perhaps on Wednesday, and that item will undoubtedly come to hand early this week. I recite these several instances simply to keep you informed, of course, and assume that in each instance there will be letters forthcoming in all good time.

aw credit I presume I may have mentioned that Dr. Rand promised on Saturday that he would come to spend several days at the camp this week. I am of course entranced at this prospect, for it means I shall probably see him quite often and probably, as is usually the case in such visits, other people may be expected to be invited for an afternoon or evening, and there will probably be some little tours over here and perhaps a supper or two beneath the cedars, I hope, for and just because of one sitting beneath those particular cedars, returning to them always means something very special to me.

Head 31 105 1 343 31 03 005 005 010 000 003 03 005 31 023

notail In my reading last night, I got Mr. Washington out of Jumel Mansion, and eventually across the river into Jersey, and I am beginnin to be impressed by the absence of certain names which aren't perhaps pertinent to this excellent account of Washington's almost day to day career, but I am beginning to wonder why one doesn't get at least a glimpse of some of them. For example, in all the operations in and near New York, I never once ran across the name of Alexander Hamilton. Perhaps the biographer plans to bring him in later by going back a little. And then, too, I haven't met Thomas Payne as yet, -- a man in whose own biography, the retreat across New Jersey usually looms large. Perhaps he, too, is scheduled to appear later, but it does seem odd that with such a master craftsman of Freeman handling the materials, none of these more striking personalities should have come up for consideration thus far.

It has been a peaceful week end and I am hoping you may say as much for your own. The pilgrims weren't too many and as none of them were particularly interested in anything, I could brush them off with dispatch. Now for a nice hot shower, some chilled peaches and cream and a glass of Penderleaf, a chapter of Washington, and so to bed.....

2652

5624

Monday, August 18th, 1952.

How nice, --how doubly nice, --in finding both your Wednesday letter with the smaller reproductions and the greater envelope with the enlargements in this morning's post.

How can I begin to say Than You. I think the whole shooting match is grand, and I'm crazy about the little folio with the small pictures, --so handy, just as you suggested, to let my local friends explore without doing any damage to the larger ones that may be used for publicity at one time or another. And it is curious how both white and colored seem so fascinated by snapshots, especially the latter, for, come to think of it, I reckon they perhaps do not see many, and there invariably seems to be a little element of surprise and delight when they can recognize some familiar personality or scene.

Wassn't it hilarious, in view of the two rather similar back-grounds, that Kodak should have slipped up in the enlargement of the one on the back gallery, printing the thing in reverse. I opened the package containing the enlargements as soon as I returned to Yucca from the Post Office, and as my secretary didn't arrive until nearly 8 o'clock tonight, I had not read your letter when or before, examining the enlargements. At first glance, when I discovered the instruments to be going in the opposite direction, I gulped and blinked and thought of running to look in the mirror to see if I could detect anything especially wrong with my own make up. I somehow felt so turned around that for the moment, I couldn't make out what was wrong. Then it dawned on me what had occurred and I had lots of fun re-seeing the print with the correct execution along side the other, as though seeing myself forwards and backwards all at a single sitting. I suppose this sort of thing happens every once in a while but probably most films carry no reading on them, so that in the majority of cases, people simply accept them as odd and let it go at that. Well anything in which I appear is likely to seem a little odd, but with the other shot in juxtaposition the contrast is really arresting. It goes without saying that I am as happy as a clam about the whole thing and I shall get off Mrs. White's print to her in tomorrow's post with an appropriate letter, and I know she will be very happy to see her pot in it present situation.

5625

I have been as busy as a bee all day, as the faulty typing may suggest, although, if memory serves, my typing yesterday was even worse, although I didn't have the excuse of tiredness. The thermometer touched 105 and there was no breeze, but there were pilgrims whom I didn't need to see, since I had a garden-er or two to give me a final hand before the cotton patch claims every mother's son for the next two or three months.

Among others, Mrs. Sterling of the Audubon-Oakley Park came to see me. She had lots to tell and I had lots of time to listen to such a person. She was heading for Shreveport where yesterday's papers announced that she would address some Federation of Clubs. Among the things of especial interest she spoke of were these points:-

She was so glad a few years back to have found and sent to me by a member of the family the packet of letters Miss Cammie had written the Mathews sisters, then mistresses of Oakley, and especially the nice letters in which the Madam had spoken of her visits to Oakley with me. You can imagine how astonished I was at this news, for nobody had ever delivered any such packet to me, and I apologized to Mrs. Sterling for my seeming lack of appreciation in not having written to thank her for her kindness. I promised her she would hear from me later after I had tracked down the packet, which, as I understand it, started out via Baton Rouge.

As regards lovely old Cottage Plantation, she told me frankly she was disappointed with some of the things done there. It seems the actual owner has lots of money, holding patents on television things and heaven knows what all, and that is his brother-in-law and the latter's wife who occupy the place. As you know, the Cottage is an early house and the ceilings are rather low, and so it is almost impossible to imagine anybody introducing a rock crystal chandelier in the dining room. I reckon people are bound to walk around the thing rather than beneath it. It seems a sign on the public road, announces "The Cottage. - Over Night Guest", and that the old detached brick kitchen where Miss Louise used to have such elegant meals prepared, has been converted into a Gift Shop. It all sounds a little on the regrettable side.

On the lighter side, she mentioned a recent servant problem she had had. The daughter of her servant, - the daughter being seven months in pregnancy, secured a license and with her beau, went to Woodville to get married, but the authorities there refused to tie the nuptial knot, explaining the "girl is too young". Don't you love that.

It was so good of you to take time out, in spite of pressure, and blessings on you again for all the happiness your kindness bring my way.....

Rock Hall 8/13
Mrs. Skiffon 8/17
5626

Tuesday, August 19th, 1952.

Memorandum: A little threat of a pin-point drizzle which came to naught so far as moisture was concerned, breezed in between 4 and 5 this evening, and now at first dark the thermometer is down in the 80's and everything is delightful, following a muggy morning that "hoovered" too close to the hundred mark.

Today's post was pleasantly thin, with letters from Madam Marco which nobody came read and from Lady Lake which I assume to be long hand, as of up to now, but just at this moment it occurs to me that she usually does employ a machine, so there will be something to examine for the secretaries on the morrow.

At last night's sitting, it seems to me I had a half dozen additional points from Mrs. Sterling to report, but in the interim, I seem to have forgotten them. But she did mention Mr. Kane, first with reservation and then, when she discovered no fervent enthusiasts for the gentleman in this quarter, she really went to town on him, giving quite an account on the gentleman's way of taking advantage of people's kindness and imposing upon acquaintances of those who have proffered him friendship. But this is all old stuff in a slightly different garb, and so the details aren't worth enumeration.

But speaking of Mr. Kane reminds me to say that several ladies have recently mentioned having stumbled across the first installment of his life of Dorothy Dix in the last Woman's or Women's Home Companion, and how very entertaining it is. If you are caught up on your other reading and want a good tale, accordingly invite your attention to said periodical. It seems to me it was Madam Regard and Ora who spoke of the first installment of his life of Dorothy Dix in the last Woman's or Women's Home Companion, and how very entertaining it is. If you are caught up on your other reading and want a good tale, accordingly invite your attention to said periodical.

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the first installment, and as having liked it.

Dr. Pierce of the Federal Agricultural Experiment Station in the Shreveport area was here today for dinner. He is just back from a little swing around Arkansas, and on through Texas. He says the drought situation in those regions he visited is pitiful. Around McKinney, Texas, which, I believe is a little North of Dallas-ForthWorth, the dry spell began so early than miles of cotton never even came up from the seed. Such tales makes one realize how very fortunate we really have been in this section of the State. I guess it must have rained a bit to the South of us, too, and at the right times, for the current estimates for the sugar crop is a bumper one.

Orla telephoned yesterday that she and R. B. were driving one of the Magnolia grandsons from New Orleans back to Magnolia, after the youth had spent the day with their boys in town, and that they would stop by to say howdy if the hands of the clock hadn't swished around too fast before they got away from the Herzog mansion. I don't like such tentative dates much, for it always leaves one a little at tail ends, but I made the most of the balance of my evening, after my chat with you and some mail, by getting caught up a bit on my Strauss, Tchaikovski and Mozart, for I was way behind in that section, after the weeks of quiet of my machine. And so I sat rather later on the gallery that I might have, had there not been any prospect of callers. I had illuminated the gardens to the extent of a few lamps which, at this stage of vegetation, are pretty much concealed among the greenery and the flowers, and therefore doubly effective. I rested my eyes a little and Die Frau curled up along side and did a bit of resting, too. I am glad to say the visitors never did show up, for I didn't feel like entertaining, and besides, I was entranced at the opportunity of getting caught up in the musicale section.

It seems to me I heard something about a telephone from Shreveport regarding the advent of a flock of little Wenks for a week or so before school opens, starting, I know not when, - either as to Wenks or school. I expect Celeste will bring back her nephews with her on Monday, and the Wenks and the Regards ought to make quite a stand for whatever by way of a racket that may be in the offing. The colored schools for the elementary and high school children close their summer session this Friday, and then begins "vacation" on the end of a cotton sack for all the ex-pupils. So rigs the calendar, and so do I fold up my beard....

Lema -- 7
5628

Wednesday, August 20th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A long, humid, chicken-on-a-hot-griddle sort of day, which now, at first dark, has just come to a seemingly abrupt close, and I think it silly to start chatting with you when dullness is bound to be the order of the sitting. But I feel like chatting regardless, and so, without waiting to catch my breath, I shall plunge in.

The afternoon started five minutes after dinner when some Texas people arrived. They were nice and we toured, with but a single break for me to bark out a few directions at a couple of dithering gardeners. As I said goodbye to Texas, old Birmingham, Alabama appeared, --a couple of landscape gardeners and their wives. They were nice people, and so a tour was in order. But just as they left, old Oklahoma pulled up and they were nice and there was a tour which broke off just as New Mexico arrived and so things spun until supper when I decided to do a bit of watering of day lilies and camellias before dark, but Dr. Rand and a Mr. Scarborough arrived for a brief chat and to say that there would be twelve guests on Sunday, --at the camp, and as none of the people had ever been to Melrose, might a tour be arranged. It might, of course, --and whatever happened to the secretaries, I never did learn, although I know that Daisey, in the ell, Mina and somebody else, in letter form, repose in my armchair for another day.

But while the morning was alright, as balanced up against the afternoon, the morning itself was busy enough in quite a different and somewhat social sort of way. I got the gardens going about 5:30, turned Yucca inside out by 6:30, and after breakfast, took a crack at a couple of "must items" for the mail, and was about to leap in the direction of the Post Office when Ray Balthazar knocked at my door. In a most diffident manner, she invited me to pass by her house to inspect her garden, --and just any day that would suit me, and she apologized for interrupting my work. Sometimes she reminds me a little of that character Mary Rhodes created in The Cherry Cloak, --good, honest, diligent and what with her stiff leg and a certain loneliness, a little sad, perhaps, beneath a surface of exquisite politeness. I told her this was the most appropriate hour in the whole week, and we started out, her car awaiting us at the side gate.

5629

5629

Poor May, so kind, so conscious of her mulatto tint, and inately wanting to do the right thing, insisted on opening the door of her car for me. It was hilarious to say the least, but somehow so charmingly motivated by a desire for color to do the right thing by the superior white, that it was touching.

She has a large yard, with infinite possibilities, which she will never realize, since she will plant like the Madam, -- probably, but she loves flowers and that is all that matters. I pointed out several advantageous places for one thing and another while I shall see she gets plenty of, come winter. Timidly, it seemed, when we started for the house for coffee, she asked me if I ever ate fried chicken. As it was 9:30, all thought of food was absent from my mind, but thinking she might have preserved a drum stick in the ice box for me, I agreed that I loved it.

Imagine my surprise when, on reaching her home, she ushered me to a round dining table, covered with a snowy cloth, and fragrant with honeysuckle, obviously plucked at dawn. In a trice, a handsome goblet of fruit punch appeared before me, as May chattered away from some adjoining room. A bumper of lemonade and some tea cakes appeared and before I knew it, the most delicious fried chicken I ever ate, with no end of accompanying rice, dainty greens of some kind and heaven knows what all. May was entertaining a white gentleman for the first time in her life, I suppose, and was bubbling over with delight. I was having a grand time, too, and let her buzz. Knowing her timidity about the proper respect of color for white, I occupied my role as guest more as a patron at a splendidly cuisined restaurant, but when it came time for the coffee, I gently put my foot down and suggested it would be so pleasant having it on the gallery and that both of us should sample the brew together. Somehow she managed to get her chair off behind some night blooming cereus plants and on a slightly lower level than mine, but we did have our coffee at the same time, which, in a way, flustered and flattered her at the same time.

Then she wanted to show me her turkeys, and she seems to have a fine flock, roaming under the pecanes in a field adjoining her garden. Then there was more talk about flowers and where they should be planted, and she spoke about some tuberose that had come from her grandmother Jones' place up the river. I knew there was Metoyer blood in the Balthazar family but didn't know about the Jones branch. I inquired: "You aren't a granddaughter of Catherine Clifton, are you," and she nearly expired with surprise that anybody white on Cane River had ever heard of such a person, let alone, pulling good old Catherine slap out of air like that. I must tell you more of Catherine, wife of Carroll Jones, at a subsequent sitting. But for the moment, enough to say that I was back home a little after 11 in time for a round of the gardens, dinner and I wasn't hungry, and the ensuing afternoon of pilgrims. Poor May, half a century old and thus far never having done much but slave and dram, and I

I hope someday she may get her Cherry cloak.....

5630

Nina deLuna
8/13
5630

May Balthazar's grandparents

Thursday, August 21st, 1952.

Memorandum:

Cloudy all day with a nice shower at noon, and another at 6 o'clock, --and not so much by volume but adequate enough for giving the leaves a mild drenching, and now with the arrival of dark, the clouds have vanished and the sky dotted with countless pin points of gold.

Much of the mail which I finally got around to explore, was interesting and I shall try to find some enclosures giving some idea of what goes on in the world beyond the garden gate.

In yesterday's Memo, I mentioned Catherine Clifton, and I want to speak of her a little further, for she was an exceptional character, as was her husband, Carroll Jones. According to Carroll's epitaph in St. Augustin's graveyard, he was born in Somerset County, Kentucky. According to family tradition, as a boy, this mulatto rode as jockey some of his white planter father's race horses, and on occasion, was brought to Louisiana for such doings when his father entered his racers in Louisiana turf matches. Carroll finally remained in Louisiana and married Catherine Clifton of Rapides Parish, of whose mulatto parentage, if not something more definite in color figured in her immediate progenitors.

Right after the Civil War, the Carroll Jones came to the Cane River country, where Carroll at one time was Deputy Sheriff during the Reconstruction era. It would be interesting to know if he brought money with him or acquired it as a member of the outrageous Reconstruction Parish government, but money he had, and he bought the old Antoine Frudhomme, just above Madame Aubert-Rocque's. I have heard the Madam mention the house often, as being one of the longest in the Parish. That's why I was so interested when May Balthazar told me she was present on the night the place went up in flames. She said it was a single story house, containing 18 rooms, and was about three times the length of Yucca. That is a house I should liked to have seen. The next time

5631

I encounter little Miss Clemence, I'm going to see if she can remember it, and if she can, I shall ask her to make us a sketch, don't you think so. And the next time I see la Balthazar, I shall ask her to describe the place in detail and to make a floor plan so we may have the location of the various rooms.

I thought of James M Cain today when I received two reports from different sources, --both colored, concerning the size of the lake somewhere down the road, as between here and Alexandria, where the new camp is being built. One workman, on returning home to Melrose at the close of day, told me he had asked Arthur Watson about it and was told the lake covered 400 acres, while half an hour later, another Melrosian came up with a 4,000 acre tract of water. Four hundred, four thousand, what's the difference, except that it seems to be a body of water which was until quite recently rather smaller until a dam was built to conserve and enlarge the water course. Only now do I recall Mr. Cain's inquiry regarding a lake somewhere in that region which was present in the ante bellum period but absent from all modern maps of the region, and I am wondering if this could be the one.

I read a page or two last night before folding up and was pleased to find an account of the character of the General, written at the time of the retreat across Jersey, by one Thomas Paine. That was all there was to it so far as the author of Common Sense was concerned, and I gather Mr. Freeman had so much data on the subject of his biography that he didn't want to stray afield to do more than quote from the pen of the one time London "stay-maker". And for the first time in my life, I find myself wondering why men made ladies' corsets in the 18th century, and if this was a strictly English custom, or if gentlemen fiddled with shaping up ladies' corsets on the continent, too. If I remember correctly, Marie Antoinette's favorite dressmaker was Rose Bertin and Leopardo her preferred hair dresser, but for the life of me, I can't recall the identity of the individual who ran up her stays for her. Yet undoubtedly she must have worn them, as is evidenced by several of the Vigee-Lebrun portraits, and particularly the one in which the Queen is holding a single rose.

I can't recall if I mentioned that Dee's husband, Mat Hertzog, Miss Sally's son who runs Magnolia, is in an Alexandria with a critical heart condition. After 50 years of being pampered because of a heart condition, it looks as though Miss Sally might outlive all her more robust offspring.

Have thought of little Miss Lee so often of late, hoping the weather is cooler and business not so pressing, now that summer is heading on its way out. Do grab rest whenever possible....

5632

Mr. Storm
5632 Atlanta
Stephen Perry
Sister 8/19
Miss Nellie 8/19

Friday, August 22nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

A curious mail today, as a couple of the enclosure will testify, for I didn't expect word from either source. But the General felt the impulse because he had seen somebody from Cane River while Sister wrote because she wanted something.

Her family came by for supper tonight, bringing a piece of cake and taking away a bushel of this or that. On looking at the duffie already boxed for her, she asked me why I didn't sell iris to enthusiasts in that department. I said I preferred working to save the gardens, not to selling them short. The word selling struck a note that impelled her to say she would "give" me five hundred dollars if I would sell her Cloutierville house to anyone for ten thousand dollars. Imagine. I told her she could keep the whole ten thousand, for I didn't want five per cent of anything, besides, I added, I wouldn't know what to do with so much money. I think she actually believed me.

At dinner today, I asked J. H. if he had heard from Celeste, and he said he had received a card from Grand Isle this morning, saying everything was alright. I shall perhaps draw one tomorrow. Odd, isn't it, that I should have received one from Mexico City before anything came through from Grand Isle.

As usually happens when Aurellia is left alone for a week or so at keeping house, she today developed vast dissatisfaction, and came to tell me her troubles. It seems she saw and had a chat with one of the favorite Reverend Fathers last Sunday, and he had much to tell her, including the fact that just as she has to work for a living to keep her body together, so, also, must she work to keep her soul and that she ought to go to Church every Sunday and that now and then she ought to take a vacation and go to Monroe to visit her relatives up yonder. As Aurellia works until 1 o'clock, 7 days of the week, something tells me her mistress wouldn't be too enchanted with her favorite Reverend Father for giving her servants such "communistic" advice.

Poor Aurellia.....the latest bug biting her is the desire to have a car of some sort. It seems that if Miss Celeste has one and enjoys it, she should have one, too. Besides, her cousin living

5633

in Gorham, has an old Ford truck he would sell her for one hundred dollars, and then she could get out in the afternoon and "see the pretty trees and things". But she hasn't finished paying for her mama's tombstone as yet, --fifty dollars is still due on that, --and so she can't make the most of her cousin's proffered bargain. I can just about as near picture Aurellia driving a car as I could envision, say, Plumette astride a motorcycle. And the one has about as much use for the one as the other for the other.

I continue to plod along with Washington across New Jersey, but it is rather up hill, as I'm not very interested in all the details of military operations. I notice Freeman, in his frequent quotations from Washington to "the President of Congress", invariably uses just those words and never gives the name of the President of the Congress, who, of course, was John Hancock. Perhaps this isn't intentional, or perhaps it is part of the author's strategy to keep the name, Washington, constantly before the reader and never employ the name of other personalities when their title will serve as well.

While I think of it, --going back to the autumn of 1776 at Jumel Mansion, I gather from this work that the name of the estate was "Morrisania", - or something that sounds like that, which isn't hard to guess, since it belonged to the Morrisses at that time. I suppose the person reading the book in his pronunciation of the name of the estate, with the first "a" long, as in the word "inane" which I instinctively think of every time I hear "Morrisania".

On the home front, the slattern in the kitchen is having another fling at high blood pressure, but actually not sufficient, I fear, to carry her off. Dr. Knipmeyer took her blood pressure on Thursday and found it to be at 200. She reported this on Thursday to the world, but by Friday noon she had rigged the thing up to 300, and by Sunday, if the progression in her mind keeps pace, it ought to touch 500 at least, I should imagine, --and hope.

From the Storm card, posted in Atlanta, I gather that lady must by now be back at The Bluff Plantation, and somehow I find myself glad to think of her as being home again, although I can't seem to think just why, unless it be that always people seem a little closer when one knows where that spot is, rather than trying to keep up with the hop-skip and jump business that characterised the West Coast summer hejira.

And so we head into another week end, and one that is going to be quiet in your neighborhood, I hope. I expect thin s will be more or less hurly burly here, what with Wenks coming in and out, and the Rand guests, some dozen or so, for Sunday afternoon. But how good will seem the quiet on Sunday night when we reach the hour for our little chat.....

5634

aside on Cam River County
for special ed. for
some coming event

Sunday, August 24th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Tuesday letter, written on cards while Daisey frolicked, which arrived in Saturday's post. The glimpse you gave of how things were turning and the prospects for the week-end provided me with just what I like in correspondence, --the sense of things obtaining and the prospects for the days ahead. By the time this reaches your true hand, the Labor Day week end should be upon Manhattan if not on Melrose, only it probably will be on both places, with Manhattan making the most of the breathing space, if any, and me trying to keep ahead of the pilgrims. May we both succeed wonderfully.

Saturday night was a shambles for Ben and me. About 7 o'clock, Sam Peace appeared on my gallery to say J. A. had had to go to town unexpectedly and had taken the little Wenk boy, who is staying here for a week, with him, and that he had sent the little girl over to stay with me until her parents picked her up. I didn't know the child was on the place but it seems they had sent her up from Cloutierville with Sam Brown during the afternoon, --Sam Brown who knows as much about driving a car as a hog knows about a holiday. I asked Sam where the little girl was and he said she was coming through the gardens. It was drizzling and I waited a couple of minutes, and then started out to meet her. But I never could find her in the gardens, the big house, the store gallery, the house across the fence. Ben was getting rigged up for a date in town. I told him of my problem, and we searched together. No luck. Then I thought her family by some magic of moments, had snatched her up between the gate and my house and taken her back to Cloutierville. I tried telephoning Cloutierville but found there was no phone. Then I called Eugene in town, hoping to get the name of some neighbor in Cloutierville who could inquire for me. Eugene had to be traced all over town to be located. He gave me several names, as he is a native of the place. I tried all the names, getting the numbers from Central, but never could find anyone at home. Celeste telephoned from Grand Isle during the excitement to say she would be home Monday and couldn't comprehend what Ben and I were doing in her house where she had expected to find only J. A. It was getting toward 9 o'clock, and we decided we had better go down to Cloutierville and see how things stood. And so through the drizzle we drove, and picture our surprise on arriving there to find both house and office closed tight as a drum. Between 9 and 10

4832

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we got back to Melrose and J. B. arrived. We figured out that although the Wenks spend from Friday to Sunday, inclusive in Cloutierville, they might have gone back to Shreveport. We called that place, and the little girl answered the 'phone. That solved the Saturday night problem, and robbed Ben of his date and frolic in town. Why the parents in picking up the child didn't have her or themselves acquaint somebody with their departure, heaven alone knows, but who in the world would try to figure out their mental processes.

Today has been hot and humid and filled with many a tour, including the 18 or so who came with Dr. Rand, --no other Rands along, and this group included several of Dr. Rand's school mates of childhood, and two of his childhood teachers. Everyone seemed to have a nice time, and after they were gone, I had the Junior Suttons and the Abingtons and I can't remember all. So much for Sunday.

Mrs. Coombs telephoned me on Saturday to say she had chanced to pass by the Times office and the Editor had come in before she left. He told her he is planning a special edition for some coming event and asked her if she thought I would consent to do an article on The Cane River Country. He said he would print it anyway I wrote it without editing it and while the balance of the paper would be on regular pulp, he would introduce one glossy page with a view to providing the readers with a less perishable sheet which they might care to preserve as a contemporary picture of the region. She told him she would ask me about it, whereupon he said that he had run off a number of re-prints of the plate article, but had not got them off to me. She suggested that these be given Dr. Knipmeyer who would bring them to me this coming Thursday, --and when they arrive, I shall of course send one along to you, although it will merely be a re-print of the article you already have.

And speaking of prints and re-prints, reminds me of a Grandpere plate print, and I'm wondering if that 42nd Street gentleman would make one more so I could have it by the 1st of October. The Picayune, Life, etc., have the Grandpere prints and I fear they may not come back by October 1st, when I thought I would get The Times to reproduce it, ostensibly in an article about the St. Augustin Church fair, but slanting a bit of the news so it will give all the plates some renewed publicity about the second week in October, which ought to be a stimulant for pre-holiday buying. I hear that Millsbaugh Drug, whose entrance is flanked by windows to right and left, have the left one filled with James Aswell merchandise and the right with stuff contrived by Lestan, --none of which suggests anything drug-ish, unless our products may be thus described as being "a drug on the market".

Well, so turns the world and I'm going to turn in right now. It was so nice having your letter and I shall be holding the thought that your labor "ay week end may provide a clouple of moments just for you.....

Mrs. Holloman 8/21
Stirling 8/21

5636

Monday, August 25th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It has been a pleasant, quiet day, and although the thermometer is in the 90's, the humidity has remained down in the 50's, so it hasn't been trying, and perhaps I shall get caught up on some reading tonight, since I don't seem very sleepy.

Under separate cover with this letter goes forward a couple of Grandpere plates, which, I gather, turned out alright, although I haven't had an opportunity to run over the script with anyone as yet. It is good to know the plates are here so that they will be ready for the St. Augustin's fair whenever that affair comes off. I called one of the Reverend Father's this morning to find out the precise date, but didn't get very far. The mogul of the set up, --Father Callahan, is spending a month in Michigan, and it seems he hits the magical number. I was told, however, that they usually try to stage the thing at full moon, --sunds like Easter, doesn't it, all that dependence on the moon, --and the Reverend Father with whom I spoke thought the moon of October came about the 15th, which, I later discovered, on consulting the almanac, is not so, but rather comes on the 3rd. This, of course, will step up their bazaar a couple of weeks, perhaps.

I had in mind writing a little piece about the Fair, sending it along to the Natchitoches Times, with a view to having the notice, together with a picture of the plate, appear on the Friday before the Saturday and Sunday scuffle about the Church yard. It seemed to me this would give the Fair a little publicity and at the same time advertise our wares a little.

I shall enclose Mrs. Holloman's letter in today's post. It contains nothing of interest but I notice that she suggests she might be able to use a likeness of the plate in Town Talk, and although I blush to mention it, it does seem as though we need two prints rather than one, as suggested in yesterday's memo. With both the Natchitoches and Alexandria papers carrying the cut early in October, a maximum amount of interest should thus be created at just about the most advantageous time, it would seem.

5637

Unmistakeable splotches of yellow and brown are beginning to exert themselves across the gardens but I try to eliminate the yellowing leaves of the bananas for a little while to maintain a maximum of greenery in that section. When trimming the bananas on Saturday, I clutched a yellowed leaf but let go right away again, as it developed, and with vast speed, that on the reverse side a fine hornet's nest had been fashioned by some of my insect neighbors. But I was lucky in the contact, for while I got a few stings on the fingers and arms, none of them took a crack at my eyes or ears, and so I had nothing impressive by way of swollen eyes or cauliflower ears to trot out as Exhibit A of my encounter. Nobody ever heard of hornets building their hive on such a flimsy foundation, but this year's generation of hornets apparently wanted to be different.

The thought occurred to me this morning that Life might possibly be interested in the atchitoches Christmas festivities, and I am writing the particulars to their "r. Wilds of New Orleans. It occurred to me, too, that the Picaune might also find it suitable material for a magazine article, so many people journey all the way up here from the Crescent City to observe the doings. But I think it might be difficult to sell any publisher the idea, since every city goes in for holiday decorations. I haven't tried to analyse in my mind what it is that makes people journey to atchitoches from so far, but off hand I should say that it is because the local treatment has nothing at all of the element generally present in all other such efforts I have seen, --something that ends up by making the town look like a poor imitation of Luna Park. In atchitoches, however, the whole thing is done in such a subtle manner that the impression is more like that produced by a firefly as opposed to a big Mazda bulb, and that very quality might make it difficult to sell as a story to pulp publications. Remembering Mr. Kleiser had painted a night scene of the town during the festival, I telephoned the Chamber of Commerce to inquire about its location, and Mr. Forrester said he would like to come to see me and as he had a copy, he would be glad to give it to me when he comes along, and so we shall have that as a starter for a possible article.

Today J. A. did one of the typical things which makes him so different and likeable. Yesterday we dined alone and talk feal on the grocery store da inci in town. J. H. said he had give up the grocery for shoe-shining to give him more time for painting. He asked me what I thought of the paintings and I told him I thought the youth needed encouragement. Today J. A. brought home a couple of the boy's canvases and is going to have them framed for the African House collection. The paintings are the poorest the boy has done, but they are big and so is J. A.'s heart to make such a gesture. Now for a go at the reading machine and then to sleep for tomorrow has a busy pilgrimage cale

Cady Lake 8/23
Julia File 8/23
Mrs. Bourman 8/21
Am. Foundation 8/21
5638

Tuesday, August 26th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find such a fat mail in this morning's post.

The photographs, together with your Friday note came through unheut and uncrushed, marvelous to relate, and your Saturday letter came in the same good order.

I had an opportunity to run through your Friday note and to absorb one of the three pages of your Saturday letter, after which an interruption intervened to allow my secretary time to escape, and I didn't blame him, for it was first dark and he was probably tired physically from chasing cotton bowls all day. And so the balance of your letter, I have tucked away safely in the armoire and so am assured of continued delight at mail time on the morrow.

It is striking how many things you referred to in your letter have been subsequently answered or were answered, as of today, for example, by the advent of the lost Cane River Country items which, after dawdling about somewhere or other since August 1st, finally touched home base, the packages looking slightly the worse for wear but only three plates smashed, which seems to me a favorable average, as stacked up against the mileage they may have covered in the past 25 days.

Your expression of hope that the Grandpere item would get here in all good time was answered, of course, when the last mailed carried a couple of the items to you. It is so thoughtful of you to suggest that this item might be photographed, but it seems to me your 42nd Street artist did such a good job in doing the sketch that the latter prints from it will serve as well as a direct photographing of the plate itself, and since the sketch was a bit larger than the plate design in its final form, perhaps the photo of the sketch may even serve better. I leave it to your own good judgement, but in considering the matter of reproducing the thing in print, it strikes me the sketch photo may, because of its clearness, be superior to anything that

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could be effected through the medium of the finished plate.

The little folders, struck off by Charles Cunningham, came to hand today and I am sending a couple under separate cover.

I thought you might have use for a couple for pasting purposes, if the presence of Lestan's name doesn't preclude them for preservation. In case it is better not to keep them, just toss them into the basket, and I shall save a couple extra ones so that you may draw on them at some other time, if that is more convenient. I think you will agree with me that the Times did a nice printing job, and, oddly enough, I have never as yet heard from that office directly regarding this matter, although I have written to express my thanks, of course. I telephoned the Editor this morning but learned he is at home with a severe cold and will not be back before Monday at the earliest. I shall call him then to thank him in direct conversation, for he will long since have had my note on the subject, and I shall take that opportunity to inquire about the proposed article on the Cane River Country, as mentioned in a recent Memo. From the messenger delivering the pamphlets down here, I learned that the Editor thinks he is indebted to me for having done the plates, and that as a member of the community, he feels it the least expression of his appreciation that the pamphlets should have been printed on my behalf. It is so rare to run across such an attitude, and of all places in the Fourth Estate, that I cannot escape wondering. The next move is mine, of course, to accommodate the Editor with an article on Cane River and then it will be his turn to give Grandpere's plate space just before St. Augustin's bazaar gets under way.

But speaking of nice print jobs, I must say I think the reproductions coming to hand this morning are splendid, even, as I understand it, my eyes are inclined to be "resting" as I attack the screen. I was interested in having a glimpse at the Manhattan prices for prints of this type, and it just occurs to me that unless my memory is playing tricks on me, the prints I sent along, the three forwarded before the films, were not precisely the same shape as the ones Kodak made. Personally I like the Kodak ones better, being more compact for the type of thing they portray, but I'm wondering, if it is true the local and the Manhattan sizes are different, why this is. But, naturally whatever the reason is, is of scant importance, save sheer curiosity on my part.

The report covering the Grand Isle trip is all on the favorable side, and bubbling over with enthusiasm. One of the nephews did remark, however, that "the mosquitoes would be a little rough if one staid still, but as we were always on the jump, they didn't bother us so much". Well, they can have Grand Isle, insects and all, so far as I am concerned. The enclosures aren't much but I send them along regardless. And once more my thanks for a grand

1432

Hary Rhodes 8/23
Pat 8/25
Miss Hughes 8/40
5640

Wednesday, August 27th, 1952

Memorandum:

It was so nice looking forward to the balance of your letter which I began yesterday but was forced to break off before finishing. Tonight another interruption came at about the same time. But I raced through it while they waited at the front gate, and tomorrow I shall re-read the entire letter more leisurely.

I could have batted the pilgrims both because of their hour for seeing the place and because of their stupidity. There was some man who has business dealing with J. H., his wife and daughter, a man from Illionios and his daughter. The men were alright but the women were bags, the wife being one of those Natchitoches numbers who knows nothing and will go to great lengths to assimilate anything, while the two young things were just plain scatter brained.

You can readily judge my success in acquainting them with the mysteries of Melrose when I tell you that as were strolling toward the front gate, the women began explaining to the 18 or 20 year olds that Lyle Saxon was a negro who wrote in one of the houses here on the place and had married the colored woman who owned the plantation. How Lyle and the Madam would have loved that one.

It was so good of you to give me a picture of the visitation you all had from the Illion numbers. There must have been a strain to start with before they arrived late, the uncertainty while present, and that tired feeling that comes with relief when such a thing is finally over. I go through that sort of thing once or twice a week and am always thankful when the episode is finished. Since the "bust-up" of the newly weds, this type of visitation occurs more frequently that during the brief honeymoon or whatever the few weeks period was styled. As in the case of the Winks a year or two back, I would work hard to patch up that marriage, and purely for selfish reasons.

5641

The Grand Isle vacationist seems in the pink of health and spirits but the Mansura vacationist told me this morning she herself felt so nervous, and I noticed that her hands were shaking more violently than usual. Granduallly, very gradually, I think she gives evidence of the burden of the years resting upon her shoulders, but I'm hoping that the cooler weather just in the offing will help bring things back to par, but, frankly, I doubt it.

And before leaving the health department, I regret to say that reports from the Alexandria Charity Hospital indicate that Puny is rather seriously ill. Pleurisy and complications may be too much for him, but I hope not. With Dr. Rand to take an interest in the case, I think the staff at Charity may give rather more attention to the case than usual.

I'm glad you got to see the Ivory Hunters, --a film of which I had not heard. The potentials in such a title are wonderful, and good technicolor of African settings ought to hold lots of possibilities.

I'm afraid you were a little disappointed when you opened one of the mailing envelopes sent me some time back, and discovered nothing but the re-prints and the list from Library of Congress. The latter came yesterday, --with the list in duplicate, but none of the usual accompanying material, the self addressed envelope, and so on. I'm not sure if the list sent you is to be checked or not. If it is, and if there be a place to add suggestions, you might jot down Saxon's Children of Strangers and Prout's Cities of the Plain. We have asked for them before and having gotten no where, we might just as well keep on asking, and the more so this time, following a hot letter I wrote the American Foundation regarding the library policies, --an attempted quieting response, coming back by way of acknowledgement, as enclosed yesterday. Don't bother at all with the thing if it turns out merely a list of stuff. Simply chuck it in the basket.

Of today's incoming mail, I shall send a couple of samples, including the letter from Mary Rhodes, Miss Myra and so on. I always enjoy Miss Myra's notes, but toward the end in this one, she seemed to get off the track a bit, although her concern over the problem probably impelled her to go into the subject a bit exhaustively.

According to my agents, by odd coincidence Mexico City returned at just about the same time as did the other travelers, but I have heard nothing regarding the matter, either from Sa Majeste or la Montespan, --although from the latter there will undoubtedly be news soon enough.

Must knock off a letter to Pat, Mr. Gather and a few others, and then, I think, indulged in a bit of a muiscale before calling it a day. There

Dora^{2/18}
5642 8/18

Thursday, August 28th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Sunday letter in today's post.

It came as a surprise to learn I am scheduled to receive some additional small prints, for I had not anticipated them. As they were being sent a day or two after your Sunday letter, I reckon I may start looking for them at the end of the week or early next. How nice of you to give me the pleasure of looking forward to their receipt.

There wasn't anything of particular interest in the day's several pieces of 1st class mail from other quarters. I shall send some of the stuff along, either herewith or under separate cover, although it will be scarcely be worth your trouble reading. I think you will get a laugh out of the inquiry from Sister, asking me how Ben McKinnis spells his last name. If only she would write him to inquire how I spell mine, after all these years. I understand some of the spelling appearing in other sections of the letter, aside from the envelope, is pretty funny, --such as "flours" for flowers, --and so on.

The Knipmeyers brought their newly wed son and daughter-in-law with them this morning. Jack is in the Army and his wife works in a cancer laboratory in 64th Street, Manhattan. She seemed very pleasant.

Mildred Cunningham came this afternoon with Mr. and Mrs. Bowles from New Orleans. They, --the latter, had made their initial visit her in June and wanted to come back. I enjoyed seeing them again. Mildred said the Millsbaugh Drug company had recently received a letter from some lady in Oklahoma who claimed kinship to the Prudhomme family, and having heard of the Cane River plates, was writing for a couple. Odd, isn't it, how news gets about.

I might have remarked, when speaking of the Shreveport letter, that in an earlier letter, I had pointed out there would be no extra plates for the holidays and that if any were needed for that

5643

occasion, it would be well to advise me now, so they might be set aside if desired. The response was typical, answering nothing.

In regard to the impending political campaign, which really seems slow at getting off to some kind of a start, I must say that up to the present, it would seem that Stephenson seems to have the edge on things, and I must say the quotations coming to hand seem to make pleasant listening. I think his support of McCarthy on Mr. Eisenhower's part, isn't going to help him in some quarters.

In regard to the Stephenson stand on tide oil lands, he is quite right, even in the minds of such Republicans as J. H., and I think the Governor of Texas has used the tide lands thing as an excuse for not voting Democratic, although he is supposed to be a Democrat. Actually many of the politicians, reflecting big money in Texas, are Republican in every thing but name, and it will certainly be exhilarating if sometime or other the two party system actually gets established down this way, beginning with Senator Byrd of Virginia, and moving straight South.

I saw the ladies across the fence, briefly this morning, for they were entertaining a couple of the Reverend Sisters from across the river. I found the latter quite gay and enjoyed my brief chat with them. Our hostess was in a happy frame of mind, too, but did touch on some serious points she wanted to stress, including one statement, --I assure you in all seriousness, when speaking of a successful business man in town, she declared that "he is a marvelous dancer, and everyone must admit that dancing is one of the very important things in life, very important", --and the Reverend Sisters glanced at me and I looked at them, and nobody said anything.

This afternoon I saw Celeste about 2 o'clock, just as she was leaving the house to get into her car. She was wearing a somewhat curious bathing suit, sort of on the Gay '90 side, black of material and much white edges. She was taking her nephews and some other people to Kisatchie National Forest for a picnic, and kindly invited me to accompany them. Everybody, including myself, would have dropped dead, I reckon, if I had accepted.

There's a grand moon tonight, just made for a musicale on the back gallery, of which I propose to make the most forthwith, letting my thoughts wander Northeastly at will.....

D. D. Garner 8/26
Robina 8/27

5644

Friday, August 29th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Sorrow and joy have such a way of treading hard on each other's heels, and I was genuinely sad last night when I learned that Mrs. Charles Wagner's only son had died. He was an architect, 39 years old, living with his wife and three children at Knoxville, Tennessee. He was a victim of polio. He was buried yesterday, I learned, in Natchitoches. Poor mother, poor wife, poor children.

And last night, just as I sealed your Memo, it was 8:30, a tap came at my door. It was Ben who had chanced to be at the store making a call, when, as he hung up, the phone rang. It was for me, --Operator 4, Charleston, South Carolina, calling.

I had no difficulty getting Charleston where Operator 4 wanted to know if I had any idea who might be calling me. I did. And in a few minutes I heard Madam Storm. She was calling from the plantation, and tried to call last night, she said, but a wind storm had blown down all the wires, but that service had been restored.

The reason she wanted to call was because she had received the Cane River Country plate and wanted to tell me how much she liked it, etc., etc.

She said her trip across country, coming East, had been wonderful until the plane stopped at Atlanta where the heat was tremendous. She got to Charles the same afternoon and everyone was out to meet her, relatives, friends, servants, "everything except a band".

She says she hasn't had time to rest up any as yet, as there has been so much work to be done, directing the gardeners and getting things back in place after the big wind, but that she is feeling fine and simply wanted to have a little chat. I asked her about the moon situation over the Cooper River and she said it was just the same as over Cane, if the sky in Louisiana was a cloudless as in Carolina. And that was all, but I thought it kind of her to bother to telephone, and while in no way related, it sort of balanced up the Wagner news.

5645

Before I forget it, I must drop Dora a note to report on a word used by my secretary in reading the enclosure from Shreveport. I don't recall the phrase exactly, --something about Miss Louise and the Great Beyond, which the secretary read as the great bayou. I guess that isn't so very funny, but I think Dora will like it regardless. In a country where, except in flooded times, most of the water courses are remarkably placid, the line from the 23rd Psalm, --"He leadeth me beside still waters" probably does suggest some meandering bayou to our colored friends.

The old adage about "no great loss without some small gain" seems applicable in the present harvest time on Melrose. So many of the Parish planters are using mechanical cotton pickers that there seems to be an abundance of urban pickers to be drawn on by plantations, such as this, which isn't employing the mechanical gadget this year. I believe we haul about 75 pickers from town daily, --they being rounded up by a leader living in town, and taken care of by him or her, during the entire day's labor. Everybody, --planter and picker, seem to like this arrangement, and cotton is rolling in consequence. I suppose the plantation has ginned 2 or 3 hundred bales for itself during the past couple of weeks, and no telling how many hundreds for neighbors ginning here. There have been no rains of consequence since the cotton began opening, and the grade appears excellent, and probably brings between 40 and 45 cents per pound. With the average bale supposedly weighting about 500 pounds, and each bale of cotton having about 1,000 pounds of seed removed from it, --the seed probably selling somewhere around 75 dollars a ton, the money, like the cotton, ought to be rolling, I should imagine.

From where I sit, it looks as though there would be no great concourse of family over this week end. At one time it was thought some of the Baton Rouge numbers might put in an appearance, with the kidneys of Mrs. General aren't doing well and of all the physicians consulted, only the lady doctor has provided medicine that seemed to be perfect. But instead of coming up here, the latest reports has it that the prescription has been sent instead, and so that lets out Baton Rouge, and I have heard nothing from any other directions to indicate a visitation. I am so glad to learn from your Sunday letter that cooler days, --and nights, are beginning to appear, and I hope this week end especially and weeks on end just ahead may hold lots of bright blue weather.....

5646

Times-Pic. 8/18
Dora 8/18
Maryben Davis 8/26

Sunday, August 31st, 1952.

How nice to find your grand letter, together with the prints, in Saturday's post.

People like Charles and Ida, Madam Marco and Dora will like seeing the pot, and the more so because they know the Rands and the Whites. And then there are one or two people about the place who have asked me if sometime I wouldn't have a picture for them, and these will just suit the need. And thus a glam of sunshine will go spattering in different directions, and you will be the happier because it is all your own brand of sunshine, of which I know no finer.

It goes without saying I shall be curious as to whom you bumped into at the funeral where one has a way of seeing lots of unexpected faces. And the great advantage of seeing them on such an occasion is the fact that one really doesn't have to get too involved in conversation and there is usually a limit within sight, as to the length of time such a gathering will last. Remarkable, isn't it, how the ailing brother lingers on and the more robust one departs. Logic seems to play such a little part in the arrangements of human destiny, it would seem.

Contrary to my expectations, Saturday and Sunday have been rather on the quiet side. Perhaps tomorrow will witness more activity on the part of the road runners, all of whom seem to be still running so far as Saturday and Sunday are concerned, but probably some will slow down on Monday, --or a week hence.

According to my radio, early this Sabbath morn, Charleston caught the tail end of the current hurricane. What with the excitement they had in that area early last week, with telephone poles blown down and what not, it seems as though this second visitation runs pretty close to the earlier one.

I guess we are not going to feel any effects of the disturbance in this area. The Weather Bureau last week had spoken of the possibility of rain if it got as close as Florida, but the skies remain cloudless, --and everything is as dry as ever, save for the heavy dews. And the latter I noticed particularly Saturday morning, for I spent five hours at Arenbourg where in the more shaded places, the dampness still lingered in the tall grass when I left. Everything is looking so green and nice in that quarter, I was sorry I had an appointment here before before noon that forced me to return to Melrose.

3432

5647

Last night I got around to finish Mr. Freeman's opus on Mr. Washington. I was glad to say, --and to put it more precisely, that I had finished all I have to hand, --which is volume 4, --down through Valley Forge. The whole business of this 4th volume is so day to day military that it has been a study and not a recreation, but I am glad I devoted my time to it, for I understand Washington the better and admire him the more, while at the same time, I don't feel the intense yearning I used to regarding a chance to explore Mr. Freeman's account of Mr. Robert E. Lee, for assuaging the latter is weighted down with as much military detail as the Washington biography. I can put off fighting a day to day skirmish of the Civil War for ever so long.

The whole burden of volume 4 tends to throw into ever greater relief what is perhaps Washington's greatest virtue, --patience to a degree that is heroic. I am a little puzzled that things reached such a low ebb at Valley Forge, by and large because of the utter failure of the Commissary Department utterly neglected its duty to provide food and clothing. In a way, having known Pennsylvania a little 150 years after Valley Forge, I am wondering that the soldiers themselves weren't able to round up a little wild game for their starving stomachs, but for all I know, they may not have had sufficient gun powder to venture into the forests on such a mission.

The biggest scoundrels of the Valley Forge era were the Frenchman of Irish ancestry, -- one Conway, and along side him were the American Mifflin who probably was responsible for much of the starvation and nakedness, and young General Wilkinson who, a quarter of a century later, was to figure so prominently in the Aaron Burr business. All the above three were obviously bags of the first water.

On the reverse side were Lafayette, von Steuben, probably without the "von" and, among other Americans, one Alexander Hamilton. I had forgotten that Madam Washington spent much of 1778-1779 with her husband at Valley Forge.

An appendix spoke of the places Washington inhabited in New York in 1776, the longest place of residence from April to August or some such, occupying the Montier property, --I am not sure of the spelling, later to be known as Richmond Hill. This mansion in the country stood at the or near the present corner of Varrick and Charlton Street, --I'm not sure of Charlton spelling either, but I think it was a couple of blocks below 61 Seventh Avenue South, and it was Richmond Hill, of course, that after the Revolution became the home of Aaron and Theodosia Burr.

Well, all this seems to have developed into quite a "literary evening". But now I must pause and what with the big moon, turn to things musical before calling it a day. May yours have been as peaceful.....

4132

5648

Dr. Tucker
8/54

Monday, September 1st, 1952.

Memorandum: It seems so odd, -- Labor Day all over the country, but

people actually laboring madly in these parts. I suppose the banks may be closed, but I guess everything else is functioning, and just to demonstrate no alteration in things, the thermometer continues in the 90's, with a low of 75 promised for tonight. But the weather bureau does say that a cold mass of air is sliding along southward, having reached Oklahoma, and that we are due for widely scattered showers and a drop in temperature tomorrow evening. That will be an unexpected and novel change.

My mind was vastly relieved today when a statement arrived from a Natchez bank, indicating there is a five hundred dollar balance there in Mr. Belle's favor. For the last two or three years of her life, the Madam would sporadically remark that we still had \$70.00 of Christian's money in Natchez and we ought to hurry up and spend it. Whenever she said this, and she repeated it often, I dismissed it as a mental process slightly out of joint, but later I found myself wondering if she might have drawn on the account, reducing it to the seventy dollars, but today's statement indicates the sum is intact and it is good it can be drawn on whenever Mr. Belle wishes.

I presume I have mentioned before that prior to Mr. Belle's visit to Natchez at the time during the war when he resigned his post following the Vichy take-over, he sent a check for a thousand dollars to the Madam and me, asking we deposit it as a checking account in our name, and that whatever charges and costs his visit here, in response to Miss Cammie's invitation, the charges were to be drawn by either of us to defray his expenses while he was a guest. And I suppose I have related to you, too, how after he arrived, an intense jealousy developed on her part, fearing, I suppose, she might eventually lose me, and that one week end when I was in Natchez, Mrs. Ferriday Byrnes received a letter from Miss Cammie saying what a dreadful stingy, grafting person was Mr. Belle, that he wouldn't even pay for his laundry, etc., etc., a giving the most false impression of a person as a poison pen letter could from a financial point of view, while in reality, she was enjoying the checking account in her own name of his thousand dollars. Poor Miss Cammie, so frightened for fear of losing me that she did such dreadful things hoping to cut off mutual friends and so guarantee herself the association of about the only person in the world on whom she could lean.

8133

5649

Wasn't it good to hear Edward R. Morrow again tonight. And didn't you think his symposium on the business of a news reporter excellent. I agree with him that it must be impossible to maintain complete objectivity, but his promise to attempt just that in so far as possible was reassuring, not so much to be applied to his own case as the many, like the Fulton Lewises who, by choice of word and phrase and inflection are past masters in bias and prejudice.

As for the enclosure, it speaks for itself. I laugh to myself whenever the lady borrows my word, "the master", since it never seems to occur to her that in blandly accepting the word, she automatically proclaims what is so evident, -- that the feminine word for master is all hers. I was annoyed at the enclosure of the two bucks, for I had written her rather specifically that all plates disposed of through her efforts would have to be at three dollars in order to protect The Village Shop which will have to sell them at that price. But such trifles apparently cut no ice in that quarter.

Mayor Keyes of Natchitoches gave a clam bake of some kind at his camp on the river today and was kind enough to send me an invitation which, of course, I declined. But as I, who had promised him a plate when he was here last March, made the most of the opportunity presented by Celeste's acceptance of the invitation to send it along by her. If she managed the thing correctly by making the presentation, with the accompanying note at the psychological moment, our side should have received a fair amount of local publicity, -- but on that score I count nothing at all as a probability.

I was entranced at some of the items listed in the September Talking Book Topics received today. At the beginning of the review, mention was made that your friend, Mr. Scourby had just completed three pictures, -- the Trinidad thing with Rita Hayward (possibly wood). The second was and third were Magic Lady with Coretta Young playing the part of an Army doctor, and the third, "Cattle Kate", one in which he plays the role of a ranch owner, -- both the two latter to be released this autumn. I believe he plays the part of a secret agent in the Haywood opus. And I am glad to report that some of the available things seem promising, and I ordered a number, including volumes 3 and 4 of Winston Churchill's history of the war, something or other by one of the Van Doren's about Jane, favorite sister of Benjamin Franklin, and an historical novel, Royal Flush, having to do with the sister of Charles 2nd. There were some essays by Edmond and a few other things, but I shall probably bear down on these individually when I get around to them. But here we are at the close of our

8133

5650

Ms. Stirling 8/29/52

Tuesday, September 2nd, 1952.

Memorandum: And so the radio this morning spoke of the rain that descended yesterday on Washington, Baltimore and New York, which gave you all a taste, I suppose, of what Madam Storm got in larger doses. I wish I might report that we had had a drench, too, but that didn't happen. The cold mass of air, scheduled for afternoon, arrived at this bend of the river around 9 this morning, bringing a pin point mist that scarcely dampened the brick pavement, after which the sun came out and the balance of the day has been cloudless and tonight the moon is of washtub proportions. The cold mass had broken up, too, but it is now in the upper 60's, and as pleasant as one could imagine.

There seemed to be a lot of telephoning on my schedule today, but none of it of great moment. I telephoned the manager of the Telephone Company, Mr. Cox, and presented to him that idea I had neglected to "hatch" some time back, -- changing the number of the telephone in the office of the Mayor, from whatever it is to 1714, supposing, if accomplished, Natchitoches would be the only town in America whose Mayor's office reminded the caller of the founding date of the community. Mr. Cox thought the idea swell. He said there was but one difficulty, -- the local system carries no number 1 as its initial digit. I reminded him that of the Manhattan system whereby a person telephoning a doctor is automatically switched to a central secretariat, if the physician doesn't answer. He said he was acquainted with that custom and thought a parallel might be introduced so that a yone ringing 1714 would automatically be connected with the Mayor's office regardless. He said he would telephone me on the morrow and let me know how much success he has had in 24 hours of striving to effect the business.

And no sooner had our conversation terminated than the Mayor himself telephoned, -- just as I was hanging up the receiver. He called to thank me for the plate and to say that he and Mrs. Keyes had been planning for some time to give me a party and that they would like to know if I would prefer to have it given in town or at their place in the country, and which of my friends I should like to be present. I thanked him but said that I never go out socially and that if I once started, I would soon enough be bogged down by contacts with people or invitation from people whom I have too longed refused, and therefore I must reject the idea altogether, but that I sincerely appreciated his kindness and that of Madam Keyes.

5651

0232

Then Editor Cunningham telephoned, saying he had really died last week from sore throat, but had staged a resnaissance and was rolling up his sleeves on the matter of a special edition of the Times which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in March, and he wondered if I would do the Cane River country. He said it would not be edited in any way, --and what a false step he took in making such a statement. I would even edit my own stuff if I could only read it. He said whenever it was convenient for me, he would send me a photographer to spend as much time with me as I wished. He hoped to have pictures of the big house, the African House, Yucca and anything else I wanted to use, but he did want to make one special request, --a picture of me gazing at the portrait of Grandpere. I have no idea why he asked for that, but you know just as well as I do that it isn't going to be too long before some numb-skull is going to rig up some strange genealogical tree in which I will be set forth as a lost-dauphin of Grandpere's. I suppose I mentioned the other day that some bag after her tour was explaining to a couple of young ladies that Lyle Saxon was a negro who came to write at Melrose and married the colored lady who owned the place. If they can twist Lyle and the Madam into such a peculiar status, they really ought to do almost as well by Grandpere and me. Don't you think so.

But since the matter of a photographer had been brought up, it seemed to me the time was perfect for mentioning the cut of Grandpere to be used in the issue of The Times just before the local Fair. That was easily disposed of when the Editor said simply that whenever I cared to run it, all I had to do was send it along.

And that sounds to me like another push for our "flying saucer" day is voting day in Louisiana for run off candidates, and I wish most of them had done just that. Last night I heard Earle Long and Senator Fredericks beating the drum for Earle's brother, Dr. George Long, running for U. S. representative. I don't know which of the three talked silliest. Dr. Long was fighting his battles by assuring the people of his home town of Alexandria, that if elected, he would sponsor a bill to dig a canal from the Gulf to Alexandria, but what he proposed to do with said canal, once dug, he didn't explain.

I heard Mr. Truman deliver the major portion of his "disconsin" speech and enjoyed it, although I must say the Stevenson discourses are on a more forthright and intellectual plain, but probably it's the emotions that carry most voters, and neither the General nor the Governor seem to go in for that sort of stuff.

There's nothing in particular about Mrs. Sterling letter, enclosed, but I think you will agree she writes pleasantly. Tomorrow was the day Carolyn was scheduled to be back in Marshall. What ever do you suppose happened to Helen.....

5652

Madres Home J. L. Inguiz

Wednesday, September 3rd, 1952.

Memorandum: How nice to find your Saturday letter enclosed in the package with the Grandpere print in this morning's post.

For some reason, the mail was exceedingly light today, and yours was the only 1st class item coming to hand. Tomorrow will accordingly be rather heavy as a result of tonight's or rather today's scantiness.

The best news in your letter was the knowledge that you would be having a measure of quiet, and what with a prolonged week end to plan on, I hope you were able to do no end of relaxing and a bit of things that might spring up for attention from sheer impulse rather than necessity.

How characteristically kind of you to rush into the matter of the prints. It was so thoughtful of you, too, to send along the one you chanced to have. Please see that it is replaced forthwith. I am glad to have this today, so I may put it in tomorrow's post for the Alexandria Town Talk, and with the additional print coming next week, that will allow ample time for the latter to get to Natchitoches for the Times cut to be made prior to the St. Augustin fair, which, I suppose, will probably be held about October 4th and 5th. It's an odd thing how I always get October 3rd and 4th mixed up in my mind, so far as which is Madam Regard's birthday and the other J. A.'s, but I think the 3rd is Madam Regard's. Anyway the moon, even as tonight, will again be full and if the weather is as perfect then as now, the bazaar ought to do a thumping business.

The manager of the telephone company telephoned me this morning. He was entranced with the idea but as he has no numeral 1 in his entire system in this area, he cannot give me a definite answer about the Mayor's 1714 number. He said, however, that he was telephoning different telephone laboratories across the country and he felt certain that technicians in one or the other of them could work out a method whereby the method could be effected and that he would drop me a line advising me as to full particulars.

My cup of coffee across the fence was rather brief this morning.

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and
as Mesdames R. B. Williams and George Sutton appeared quite
unexpectedly. Nina Sutton was waiting on my gallery while
Ora sought for me across the fence. They had a bit of
letter writing they wanted some advise about, and I was glad
to dictate their mail for them, and as Ora can take down
long hand rather fast, it went along easily enough.

Some time back the Editor of Ladies Home Journal
wrote the Matchitoes Chamber of Commerce, inquiring about
the possibility of old houses suitable for illustrations
and articles in their publication. The letter was eventually
turned over to Mrs. Sutton who, in turn, and somewhat leisurely
asked Ora to pen a response. Ora did so, mentioning several houses
in town, --and some down the river, including Beaufort,
Oakland and Melrose. A response came back forthwith, asking
for a flock of details and a request for snapshots, if any,
that would give them some idea about the general appearance of
the places.

You see how your photographic gifts come to such excellent
use, for the ladies had not a single picture of any of the houses
about which the Journal asked, and naturally were enchanted
when I could lend them some from your collection, --pictures which
the Journal said would be returned promptly.

In the letter I dictated, I stressed the fact that the
Cane River houses were never built as show places and never
had been converted into such frozen bits of monuments, but
rather were plantation homes to start with and that they differed
from most homes on heavily traveled pilgrimage roads in that
they still were homes and not anything suggestive of R. H. Macy's
Corner Shop or John Wanamaker's Bel Maison. I hazarded the guess
that an article about homes instead of monuments might appeal
to Journal readers, but had the grace to add that that point
was none of my business.

It will be interesting to see what results, if anything,
from all this.

The weather is marvelous, --57 at dawning, 90 in the afternoon,
and back to a delicious cool again tonight. The election of
Dr. George Long was wonderful, too, a perfect landslide for a
perfect dumb bell, landed into office as the perfect representative
of the hill billies who elected him. I wonder when he will start
building his Gulf to Alexandria canal. Again my thanks for making
my day so happy and for giving Grandpere a push so he will get
to Alexandria before the opening of the canal (smile).....

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Thursday, September 4th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It's such a lovely night, cool and clear and a big old
moon just peeping over the African House.

And mentioning that building, I think it will be the
next subject of a Cane River plate, --don't you think so. I
want to have a go at the town of Matchitoes sometime in
1953, but I shall have to await Nina's return from south of the
Equator before giving that much attention. In the mean time,
I feel the urge to do the African House, and I think I can
manage that more or less under my own steam. I think
it would be nice to keep it on the light side, after the manner
of Eddie Suydam. But the mere building isn't enough, for
a few figures always steps up interest a little. Off hand,
it might be fitting to suggest the dual purpose to which the
building was put originally by introducing a couple of slaves
at the left of the building, perhaps one in a pillory, the other
in stocks, and so carry out the restraining element
for which the left side of the building was used. Then, to
balance the thing, a couple of other negroes might be placed
at the right of the building, contending with a barrel or
some packing cases, to suggest the provision side. How
does that sound as a starter. Well, we shall eventually see what
we shall see.

I didn't see the ladies across the fence today, as Celeste
took Adam Regard to the lady doctor this morning. I
believe they go to have more tests on the morrow. At supper
J. told me the pictures recently sent to town to be framed
have come back and that they look very well. I assume they
are either at the store or at his house, and I didn't
have time to pass that way between supper and secretary.

The miracle of few pilgrims continues and I pause to
knock wood, for it really can't last long. Mary Gunn came up
from Magnolia this afternoon, bringing some youth, --a jet plane
artist, with her. The youth is from Caldwell, New Jersey, and
found local vegetation wonderful. Mary is Miss Sally's granddaughter,
you may recall, and a very nice child. She begins her first
year at L. S. U. this coming week. The beginning of

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college life somehow always writes "Finis" to childhood, and when in a sentimental mood, one cannot avoid feeling just a wee bit sorry about the closing of a door, never to be opened again. And after the young people had departed, I suddenly found myself humming that old Beethoven Minuet in G, with half forgotten words that suited the tune:

"There's a land that lies beyond the sea,
Far away, far away,
From whence comes those sweet but fleeting dreams
When all else is gray.
There's a garden where in happy hours,
Long ago, long ago,
I have played alone among the flowers
And heard sweet winds blow.
In vain do they call, -- my childhood is o'er, --
I must long for that enchanted shore, --
Evermore, evermore."

So depart the youngsters for college.

For days I have been intending to remark upon the excellence -- thus far -- and I had better break off slap and pound wood madly -- the excellence of our gourd crop at Arenbourg. In the first place, as you probably know, gourds don't seem to be the easiest thing in the world to raise. If I remember correctly, Caroline remarked about her inability to get anywhere with them a while back when she sent me seeds, perhaps a year ago. And in the second place, there seems to be something so enticing about gourds hanging on the vine that passers-by, young or old, can't resist plucking them. I selected the raggedy house as a likely site for them on Arenbourg, and the fence of the avant-cour at Yucca. The Yucca ones are struggling along in a spot that is a little too shadey, but at Arenbourg they are doing splendidly as of now, but what with fisher folk roaming up and down the river, and likely to spot the Arenbourg ones between the time the leaves wither, exposing the fruit, and the appropriate time for picking them, and we shall probably get precisely nothing. Still it is nice to know they will grow regardless.

Recently static has prevented me from getting my favorite 10 p.m. news broadcasts from De Moines, and so I have been enjoying Elmer Davis at 10 and Eric Severai over another net work at 10:15, and I relish the Davis sarcasm and the other man's comparisons. I haven't stumbled over old "Kattleborn" in months and somehow don't miss him. As an NBC artist, he must be awfully pro-conservative party..

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Dora 9/1/52
Helen Baldwin
after Labor Day

Friday, September 5th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your week end letter in today's post.

It is so pleasant to have the pleasant picture you sketched by pen of your Saturday holiday, and I am hoping the balance of the "days out" unfolded as pleasantly.

The best news was the re-arrangement of things in the "cave of the winds". How wonderful is the potential pleasantness that comes with the removal from the scene of a particularly offensive personality, and may the days straight ahead reflect that improvement forthwith and unendingly.

It goes without saying, of course, that I was interested in all reports concerning Tilloah and family and the present autumnal hejira to far places. I am glad, too, that you passed along the unexpected remark made at the bier. It somehow fitted in so perfectly with other unexpected attitudes that have gone before.

Yes, I noticed the unexpected space given "The Old Man and the Sea" but of course had no one to tell me what it was all about, and so your splendid synopsis set me straight on that point, for which I am profoundly indebted to you, since I shall undoubtedly hear many people talking about it within the immediate future, and it is always pleasant to know something about the subject matter under discussion.

And may I thank you for mentioning "Scaramouche" and "amourette", and in view of the latter definition, I shall write Caroline a letter tonight before folding up my beard.

And although I did not get an opportunity to finish the article about doings in the Cabildo, I am delighted to have the article; you so thoughtfully cut out and sent along for my delectation. The chicanery going on in that museum for years has been nothing short of a scandal, and well do I remember how Lyle used to fulminate against old Fortier, saying he was positive that he was ransacking the treasure house but had no precise proof to present. Now apparently some of the "tending" is coming to the surface, although, unfortunately, probably much of the real business will never be brought to light. But it is heartening to know that some of the original treasures have been located and are likely, therefore, to be returned. That is part of what Louisiana gets for electing politicians whose primary promise is to dig canals from the Gulf to Alexandria, and in a way, it serves them about right, although the killing part of it is that

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the hill-billies who do the electing have never heard of a museum, and wouldn't have the slightest notion of what one was, if they bumped slap into one. I suppose the so-called "clean-up" of Miss Leudivine's note books and the ante bellum newspapers is just another case in point, -- destruction occasioned by ignorance, and whether accomplished through ignorance of values or sheer chicanery, the results are the same in the end, --obliteration.

And may I thank you for having taken care of the Library of Congress business and for appending the suggestions. It is so nice of you to keep in mind certain possibilities for like use in future listings. I approve whole heartedly and thank you for being so generous with your energies in taking care of these details.

At this point, you might turn to the enclosures, which may be in this envelope or an accompanying one. Odd that the one from Mr. Belle and the informative one from Helen should have arrived in the same post.

I expect Carolyn didn't write me when in the Marshall-Waco neighborhood, thinking I would start fussing at her to come along with her camera which she undoubtedly expects to do a little later in the season. But she need not rush, so far as I am concerned, for I am dismissing her from my mind, so far as potential articles are concerned, and I shall make no effort to stave off Life or the Ladies Home Journal. As a matter of fact, I may even take a hand in direct contact with both magazines, or, strangest of all, I may even write Carolyn herself to contest The Ladies Home Journal, but however things turn, my own actions will not be influenced by further waiting for her to make up her very busy mind.

It was certainly good to hear from both Christian and Helen, and what busy lives they all do live, especially when measured by mileage. It makes me dizzy to contemplate.

My day has been a busy one, and the weather, thank heavens, glorious, with ample stocks of ozone in the air to give me the pep I needed. There were lots of tag-end things to be attended to this morning before pilgrims started around 10, and this afternoon Mr. Forrester of the Chamber of Commerce came with prints of the Klsier paintings of Natchitoches which may or may not be used in subsequent publicity. There were research people to be assisted and the usual run-of-the-mill plantation personalities needing advice, encouragement, dis-
couragement, a c., etc., and it was dark before I could call it a day and begin this little chat with you. I'm so happy over your letter, glad you like the St. Augustin plate, and it occurs to me eventually we might use a photo of the Cane River plate for publicity, but there's no rush about that. Once I thought it unnecessary, but now I'm not sure. Got the Grandpere off to town talk, and so things buzz. Now for some correspondence and then to bed, and thanks again for such a happy day.....

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Carolyn Ramsey

9/6

wife Christian's letter

Sunday, September 7th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Such perfect weather all week end, I have found myself a billicio times wishing it may be the same in your neighborhood.

Humidity is low and pep correspondingly high, and I needed all the latter, what with too much coming and going about the place.

The enclosure from Carolyn speaks for itself. It came Saturday and I responded forthwith, thanking her for the personal details and remarking that as Life magazine is toying with the idea of having a go at Grandpere and his fine Church, she might do well to concentrate on Melrose pictures at her early convenience, -- just that and nothing more, thinking the Life business might give her the necessary prod.

A note from la Montespan announced her presence in the neighborhood. I dropped by the camp behind Fugabou's along about 4, but found no one there. As I was scaling the gate, J. H. drove up, and so I had a ride back home. He said he had asked her not to come during this business season but she had disregarded the request, bringing a couple with her. He asked me if I would pass back that way again after first dark when he thought they would be back. I would. I begrudge giving up Saturday nights which I like to reserve exclusively for reading but I went regardless. The couple who had come along were resting but la Montespan was about, and as cordial as always. Her daughter was there, too, a charming child, and there was much talk about the new puppy, new school friends and so on. There was some man there from Natchitoches, too, -- Cleveland Bergdoff, of all names, but he was tipsy, and as he is horishish when sober, he didn't figure much in the conversation. The husband and wife awoke from their siesta and with Fugabou's assistance, prepared drinks and began what sounded like an

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elaborate supper, and although they were intending to have a flock of things I liked, the price of lingering was too great, in view of the dullness of the people, and so, after consuming one drink, I withdrew. That was more than ample, and I'm sure the dinner was a much greater success with only kindred souls gracing the board.

Pat was home for the week end and left this afternoon. He sails from New York on the 22nd, taking a new car he got this week end with him.

Today's interruptions were such that I have knock off a scant dozen letters only and I intend doing no more as of this date

On Saturday afternoon I learned that Celeste and Madam Regard were in Alexandria. As they had spent two mornings in town having tests made on Madam Regard who seems frail indeed, I assumed they had gone for further tests down yonder, as that had been mentioned as a probability on Thursday. Picture my surprise when I learned later that they had merely gone on a shopping tour. Shopping for health on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and for trash on Saturday,-- it's all so wonderful and beyond my comprehension.

There were some children and grandchildren of an old friend of Dr. Rand this evening. They were nice, but although the man obviously knew nothing about plants, was nevertheless quick on the trigger to identify various types to other members of the party. He explained to them, pointing to a finer flowering quince, that it was a pomegranate, the former being a bush 3 feet high and the latter 12, and got everything else equally mixed up, reaching the high point when he called the attention of the party to the fine pineapple growing along the front gallery. He was, of course, pointing with pride to the bananas.

At just this moment, as between this line and the above, it suddenly becomes clear to me that there is a certain "one-ness" in Carolyn's and Christian's personalities. Come to think of it, they probably are jointly possessed of as many similarities as any two people I know. Each thinks nothing of tremendous distances, each has a charm of personality that captivate immediately, a vast ability to find interest in things quite new to them, --people and places, and never, if each lives to be a million will never be able to stay put. Home for them will always be a place to return to after traveling up and down the big road, a place where one can remain long enough to catch one's breath to make a sortie in some other direction. Infinitely kind and considerate, each is wonderfully complete in himself. They will make friendships instantly where others would take a while even to make acquaintances, and people will remember them long after they have gone on their respective ways to more and more friendships and more or more places whose value they will be quick to sense and whose finest armadas they will never pause long enough to catch. I hope they get to know each other better if and when their orbits ever cross again, for each may have for the other lots of which each would be able to share.....

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Monday, September 8th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I thought the attached entrance ticket to the Chicago convention might amuse you, if you had never chanced to stumble over one before.

La Mabry came to see me quite unannounced this afternoon, and this slip happened to be among much of the plunder she pulbed out of her voluminous pocketbook.

She had much small talk to report from the Windy City, including no end of gossip as to how Senator Taft nearly had a stroke when the voting on the Texas, Louisiana, Georgia delegations went the wrong way, and it dawned on him all of a sudden that the jig was up.

There was also some tittle-tattle about Governor Stevenson whom La Mabry seems to admire. She said that everybody is hoping he will eventually marry the daughter of Harry Emerson Fosdick, which, of course, was news to me, as I don't see the gossip columns and seldom here the cafe chatter.

The weather continues marvelous, with a bit more heat turned on today. Yesterday's breeze made living so pleasant, although I must say I was tired last night when I eventually got around to fold up my beard. I did read a page or two from The Anatomy of Happiness before calling it a day, and I liked this thought:

"Religion, like Medicine, can fulfill its function if the people leave the Church or the doctor's office happier than before they entered. They must be neither bored nor confused nor complacent. They must have gained in their understanding of themselves and the world around them. They must have gained of their understanding of themselves around them. They must better what to do with their lives and must be inspired to act."

I was interrupted twice in taking down this dictation from the machine, and may accordingly have garbled or repeated some of it, but I think the general idea was caught.

I subscribe to the whole thing, and am amazed, in the case of doctors, that I never knew but two,--the lady doctor and friend Miller, who made such a state of mind possible for the patient. And as

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for those in the pulpits who are supposed to administer or rather minister to the needs of their flock, I must say I have known but one or two who ever seemed to recognize the importance of projecting happiness into the hearts of their congregation, and even less who were able to inspire.

Teacher, preacher, physician, with perhaps the politician tossed in for good measure, --these are the ones who should be endowed with attributes productive to effecting happiness and inspiration, but how seldom are they to be found.

A long time back I misplaced a list of people I had jotted down and checked off when sending Melrose Plantation plates thither and yon. I ran through it hurriedly and discovered that your friend, Lucy Morgan, didn't seem to have her name checked. And so I made up a package forthwith and enclosed a little note, saying the package was for her and she could place the contents where she pleased, either in Miss Cammie's room or any other place that suited her fancy. I expect, as time jogs along, the names of other people will come to mind, but I'm hoping they will be people less firmly attached to the Madam.

The brief note on the card, carrying the clipping, is from the Village "hop," Alexandria. I reckon the notice must be from Town Talk. I shall write Mrs. Bowman that the likeness of Grandpere may appear shortly in the same paper, and I shall write La Holloman, suggesting that in the brief news item, she insert a line, indicating that the Cane River series may be seen in Alexandria at The Village "hop."

Across the fence this morning, I mentioned I had received a note from the boy friend. It set off a line of intentions for a European jaunt within the twelfth month, and there was something rather touching about the way she asked one question:

"What I want to do more than anything else abroad is to have somebody take me out to dance. Do you think I would have to plead awfully hard to get him (C.) to take me."

Naturally I opined that that would give him a maximum of pleasure, and the radiation of joy was touching. Of course the fact that he will be in Burma during the twelfth month is just a detail which I shall point out in a few days before plans really get to the formulation stage. What a situation, -- ample funds for everything and all the treasures of Europe from which to draw culturally, -- and one single aspiration, --that one person would take her out to dance. I am reminded of an old jingle:

"Marjorie Daw said to her Paw,
"I'd like to be an opera star."
She got a chance somewhere in France,
But the first time she tried to dance, --
She fell and broke her contract.".....

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J.D.

9/7/52

Tuesday, September 9th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find to items in the morning post, bearing a familiar hand.

Your letter of Friday, the 5th was on top, and the big envelope containing four likenesses of Grandpere's plate beneath. Let me hasten to say that the big envelope came through as such mail should, flat as a pancake, unrumpled, unbent.

The speed with which you accomplished the making of the prints is splendid, and a couple of oak leaf clusters go to you for the promptness of said execution, and a billion for accomplishing all this for the cause. I should like to spell out my appreciation, but being a poor speller, and knowing as I do that you realize about everything in my heart to be expressed, it scarcely seems likely you could miss the full import of "songs unsung".

It was so good of you to jot down the letter, even though it had to be accomplished under pressure. I urge you, however, not to put yourself through when circumstances stack up against conversation, for you always know I will understand how the road blocks can throw off the track the keenest intentions.

That the long week end didn't turn out precisely as you had hoped is regrettable but I am hoping the following one made up for it in the opportunities afforded for accomplishing lots of things, --or nothing, --during that brief interim.

Immediately on receipt of the photographs, I dashed to Lucca and knocked off a few lines to the Natchitoches Times, together with a caption, so I could slap the whole business into the outgoing mail when the postman had made his rounds down to the dam on one side of the river and back on the other. I wanted to get the material to the paper in ample time for a cut to be made, so that the thing will appear in the Thursday issue, which, I guess, is October 2nd, so that it may be in the hands of mulatto subscribers on Friday, just before the St. Augustin bazaar opens on Saturday, October 4th. By sending along the print now, there ought to be loads of time for a cut to be made for the desired issue, and bless you again for having coordinated things so perfectly.

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Knowing nothing about the type of stuff the Journal does, I am at a loss to know precisely where to begin. A magazine that devotes itself to elegance of interiors wouldn't probably switch over to pretty exteriors, no matter how unique. Still, it occurs to me that nobody has ever done anything for publication in color of Melrose exteriors when the Chinese magnolias are at their height, and although I never examined the situation of see if an explosion of shell pink blossoms lined up appropriately with the white back drop of the big house or the shadowy recesses of Yucca. I should imagine, however, that something might be done about it if anybody cared enough about catching the display to adjust their late February--early March schedule to passing this way, amply fortified with proper film, to do something about it. Of course a variety of hazards must be taken into consideration, such as a premature visit of Jack Frost which would "cook" the blossoms in a twinkling, the chance ~~is~~ of days of cloudy-skies and perhaps rain. Still the big show does come off frequently, and might constitute a scoop for the lucky person.

At first I had thought of sending a photo of the original sketch of the Cane River country to Philadelphia, but on second thought, it might not be a bad idea to roll them a Cane River country plate, for not only would this seem to indicate the relationship of "elrose to the parish in which they have manifested interest, but also it presents the possibility that finding themselves fascinated by the geographic outlay, they might, on subtle suggestion, decide to use it as an illustration in the article. Well, we'll see. In the mean time, my thanks to you again without measure for all the happiness your mail brought me today.....

2322

5664

Robina 9/9/52
Mum Charco 9/11

It was good to know of the break you got for the week end, and I'm sure you made the most of it.

And the mentioned of Mrs. Arthur reminds me of an off the record matter of no interest whatsoever, except that it recalls to mind how Lyle used to love to get the Madam to re-tell the same old tale about people living in the Plaquemine area, which invariably ended up with "and it was Miss So-and-so, who later became the mother of Mrs. Stanley Arthur, who left town under a cloud". I guess Lyle wasn't used to the expression, and he always loved to hear Aunt "Mamie use it, --and oddly enough, I never heard her employ the cloud, save in that one single case.

And may I thank you for passing along so many interesting points in the publishing world. I'm glad Mr. Freeman has lived long enough to get Mr. Washington back to Mount Vernon, -- a possibility I was beginning to doubt, following all the details of the New Jersey campaign. And I have no doubt the Library of Congress will re(record) this volume forthwith, I hope. Sometimes they record from the manuscript; I believe for on occasion it seems to me the thing has appeared on disks about the time it has tumbled off the press, and what with the time required for "canning" the business, I assume both the recorded and ink versions were being turned out concurrently.

I have temporarily folded up "The Savannah" in favor of Mr. Churchill's volume 3, -- The Grand Alliance, which arrived today. The White House book you recommended earlier in the year also arrived and I shall alternate the reading of these two items.

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Yesterday I sent the Crager's one of the Grandpere plates. As publishers of "Children of Strangers" they ought to have one, --whether they may ever have read the book or not, for it is quite possible that there are publishers, like certain unnamed booksellers, who never cracked a book in their lives. Sometimes I find myself wondering what the Cragers are really like. From Lyle I got a fairly favorable impression. From Dr. Butler I got a rather neutral picture. It seems to me that Daisey in the Dell's thumbnail sketch hasn't been too flattering. Perhaps, since I shall probably never see them, I may never get any picture at all. But of late I have been thinking about the half dozen cases I have known, especially in business, wherein personalities which were perfectly delightful would clash and misunderstand each other completely when the respective orbits came within miles, the one with the other.

As for myself, I like it when people set me straight, so far as their opinions are concerned, about a person I am going to meet for the first time. But, whether the picture be flattering or otherwise, I tend to file it away in my mind and never take it out again until well after I have established contact with the individual and come to some opinion of my own. Often my own estimate coincides with that which has been given by another in advance, but almost equally often it does not. At the moment, I am under the impression I might not like the Cragers, but regardless of that, I thought they ought to have a Grandpere plate. We shall see what, if anything, happens next.

Picture my surprise about one second after Dr. Knipmeyer arrived today when none other than Clarence John Laughlin appeared on my gallery. He started some endless rigamarole which I cut short, telling him that as I was in conference, he would have to present himself later if he wished to have a word with me. He came back to Yucca, --I suppose he had been in the bushes, after Dr. Knipmeyer left. He had some art instructor with him, --a lady from --of all places, --the college in Denton, Texas. What Clarence John was really up to was to persuade me to have the Clemence paintings crated and shipped to St. Louis for a show to be given by some friend of his. Such a show would be nice on several counts, especially if the magazine article and the show could come off at the same time, the article to boost the show. I took the name of the St. Louis person and said I would communicate with him and send a copy of my letter to Clarence John, and a great big negative awaits him on his return to New Orleans, which will be after he returns from California where he proposes to go to pick up "Mary", the bag who was with him the last two times he was here, for it seems he married her, and I'm wondering what's wrong with her head....

5666

Friday, September 12th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so the Senator and the General met today, and in view of the initial reports covering the meeting, I am reminded of that phrase, so often applied in the past to military scuffles, --"They (General Eisenhower forces at Chicago) won the war but lost the Peace".

And while speaking of public figures, I hope you had the luck to hear Ed Morrow last night when he so swavely razed the Archbishop of Canterbury. I thought it was most adroitly accomplished. I chanced to hear his Grace on the radio a few nights before, addressing some Episcopal group, I suppose. He sounded rather pleasant, as a speaker, and I liked his humor. I was mildly amused when, in referring to some current problem in Britain, he mentioned "all the present members of His Majesty's Government...." or some such. I hope somebody will tell the Archbishop, who must have been the chief figure at King George's funeral, that today it is "Her Majesty's Government" who rules Britain.

And as I write the word "rule" instead of Rules, --or did I do it the other way around, I would remark on how the British always refer to Government as a noun requiring a plural verb. I notice in Mr. Churchill's War Memoires, he carries the same idea in regard both to the Government and the Cabinet. "Her Majesty's Government are doing thus and so" or "His Majesty's Cabinet are agreed, etc." I don't recall Americans ever employing Government or Cabinet in any other than the singular subject requiring a singular verb.

I enclose a carbon copy which speaks for itself. If I don't get around to tearing off the typed signature, you might do so, or merely toss the whole thing in the trash. It is of no importance, but I thought it would keep you advised as to what stirs. As a sales letter, it is too wordy, and as something for the file in town, --I'll send a copy to Ora, --it doesn't stress the Melrose scene too strongly, --that can come later. I thought it well to insert something about an impending article, as I did in the last paragraph. This may offer several approaches to handling a contact with the publication which Mr. Pratt represents, if the thing ever gets that far.

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Of hand, I should be glad to know if the Journal does its articles by members of its own staff and if its photographs are also taken under the auspices of the home office, as is the case with Life, Colliers and a flock of others, but not, apparently, with The Saturday Evening Post. If they do not supply their own writers, then the business of stirring one up from this bend of the river might be taken under advisement, --and perchance the pictures, although I'm not going to take Carolyn into consideration in such potentials.

With the letter, I sent a print of the Cane River Country and the re-print concerning the plates, thinking the first might give some idea of the region and the latter some notion as to potential illustrations for the article. I fixed the print of the Cane River Country in such a way, however, as to make it quite clear that it could not be used as such but would be available as a plate.

The weather continues wonderfully dry and warm with not so much as a suggestion of a cloud, although Texas seems to have been getting lots of cloud bursts. I am just back from a somewhat lengthy sitting with Adam Regard on her front gallery. J. H. is out, --perhaps la Montespan could say where, and Celeste is in Alexandria. It seems she and one or two of her girl friends thought it would be divine to go to Alexandria to a style show, but at the last moment, her friends were indisposed and telephoned her they couldn't make it. But the telephone was put into use to find others to take the places of the ailing, but with no success, and so Celeste decided she would go anyway, and Claude Clyde Emmett Davis was hustled into the drivers seat and off they sped. Madam Regard was accordingly left alone, and I was enchanted to share an hour or two with her, after second dark. She is reading the Consuelo Vanderbilt memoirs and had much to tell me about doings in England when little Miss Vanderbilt was Duchess of Marlborough. I suppose the thing is running in the Ladies Home Journal. Odd, isn't it, when one gets to going on one episode, name, book or whatever, the thing is forever bobbing up in unending succession. I suppose it is like the person with a broken arm who never saw anybody with a similar affliction until his own misfortunate, whereupon every other person encountered as a broken arm.

In the Sheer Luck Department, I must express Madam Regard didn't get a break when the chain suspending the swing in which she was sitting on the gallery broke. She was naturally a little surprised at suddenly finding herself on the floor, but wasn't physically effect, thank heaven.....

5668 Robina

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Sunday, September 14th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It has been a pleasant, quiet week end, with no pilgrims worth mentioning and a general peace that in itself has been restful. The dryness and heat continue.

The Columbia newcast at 7 this mornin out of New York spoke of rain throughout the lower Mississippi Valley, but I guess we perhaps don't figure in that category, although Mr. Jefferson thought so.

The Rands came this afternoon, and reported driving through a heavy rain which stopped abruptly down the lane between here and Montreal. So near yet so far.

But occasional cloud coverage has lessened the heat during the day. Saturday afternoon it looked as though the clouds might be getting ready to spill a few washtubfuls on us, and Madam Regard was wondering if it would spoil the picnic on which Cleste had gone, but nothing ever really happened.

Blythe this afternoon brought me what appears to be some elegant food for my supper, along with a bottle of wine. She didn't have much news. Dr. Rand sat with me for an hour or so while Blythe was blundering the gardens for rare blossoms. During her absence from Yucca, I got out a Grandpere plate which Dr. Rand liked. I wanted to give them one and I got another, asking him if Blythe might find it diverted her Mother tomorrow morning when she passed by to see her. I was well night thunderstruck when he said he might as well tell me frankly that it would be better if Mrs. White didn't see the plate, as the presence of the reproduction of the portrait of a "gentleman of color" might upset her considerably.

Had I stopped to think the thing through, I might well have realize such a possibility, what with Mrs. White's generation still so racially conscious, and yet I had dragged the thing out as a gift without anythought of the tremendous potentials. How nice it is to have been born at a time and under stars that didn't burden the soul with such prejudices.

5669

I got around to do some reading last night, and found much information regarding European doings in 1941 that up until now had been a blank to me, so far as details are concerned.

Mr. Churchill quotes direct from his personal message to Stalin, for example, several weeks prior to the Nazi invasion in June of that year, --a confidential message, --giving Stalin warning that Hitler was getting "all set" for a leap. It seems remarkable that in view of this message and other channels conveying the warning should have been so stubbornly disdained at the Kremlin. In speaking of it, Mr. Churchill takes occasion to point out that this attitude on Stalin's part brought forth a price of slaughter and destruction on the Russian people that was incalculable. With such a control over the press as obtains in the U. S. S. R., however, the people never knew that all this must be placed squarely on the stupidity of their rulers.

I found it interesting, too, that by their trade agreement of the year before, Russia was supplying Germany with vital war material slap through the months of the collapse of the continent and right up almost to the day that Hitler struck, and yet almost immediately, Stalin in a preemptory, --insulting fashion, -- called on Churchill to invade the continent which, as Churchill points out, shows clearly enough that "the wicked aren't always clever and dictators always right".

I was glad to see my friend, Y. C. this afternoon. He hopped a ride down from Shreveport this morning, had dropped in to see his father and mother, was going to the ball game at the honkey-tonk, and then back to the city. He said he hoped to see his sister, Emmalee at the ball game and was going to try to get her to finish up her last semester of school this autumn, but doubted if he would have any luck.

I returned from Watchitoches about 7:30 and reported that during the afternoon he and J. A. Williams had gone over most of the grounds of the Tucker house and could not find the treasures I had described. I hope they didn't know what they were looking for, and that somebody during the past couple of days didn't "lift" them. I think I shall gird up my loins one day early this week and make a little inspection trip on my own hook, although going to town represents a major project on my part, but it might be worth it, don't you think so....

5670

5670

P.C. Lady Lake
Waldorf
9/16

Monday, September 15th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday letter in today's post, but how sorry I was to learn of the impending hurly-burly beginning with the week end, and carrying on into this week for heaven knows how long.

First off, I urge you to collapse whenever opportunity affords, for it is just too much, really, --business and all added to the social side. And secondly, you will use mental telepathy instead of the typewriter, I sincerely hope, knowing full well that if I do not hear from you within the next couple of weeks, I shall simply charge off the silence to your good judgement in folding up the beard at the slightest provocation for "resting the eye" department.

You would have laughed to see how abruptly my secretary terminated today's reading. I think it did not quite finish, but I shall check up on the matter on the morrow. His papa's hog has been rooting about in the gardens of late, and the promise of using the shot gun on all such marauders has impelled the various owners of such porkers, including Lee's papa, to keep the animals within bounds. Twice during the day Lee has passed this way, searching for the hog which escaped from its "fort", but he had had no luck when he came to read the mail about first dark. We were sitting on the gallery and the shadows seemed a little deep for going any further when suddenly Lee, glancing up from the page, tossed me the letter as he leaped from his chair, shouting:

"There goes that there shoat into the bamboo. Now I'm getting it and so'll sleep tonight."

I assume he was successful, and as the driving of the hog required a good half hour before home was reached, I knew that was the last I was to see of Lee for tonight. I had never thought of the hog element in the problems of "le parfait secretaire" before, but so it is on Cane River.

0530

5671

In view of all the excitement on your calendar for tonight, I reckon you had scant opportunity to think of,--let alone, hear --Ed. Morrow. It was a good 15 minutes, and I liked the hilarious quotations from a Russian magazine on American baseball. He said there was a picture of a player who had pass out, and the caption explained that this bloody game, perpetrated by men "from business", bought and sold the players like slaves, and that the picture was one that had been taken during a battler between the two teams, --the St. Louis and the Rodgers. How the Brooklyn Dodgers ought to like that one.

And while on the subject of quotations, I wish I hadn't too far buried the pages from the 3rd volume of Churchill's memories which I explored a bit last night. I liked the touch so much that frequently appeared in the account of the first visit to the White House at Christmas time, 1941. Naturally I liked the reference to Mrs. Roosevelt, in which the author remarked that she had thought of everything to make her guests so comfortable, and I wish I could remember the precise wording to pass along wherein the dail routine was mentioned, and how Mr. Roosevelt himself prepared cocktails before dinner, and how later in the evening, the Prime Minister preferred to push the President's wheel chair from the drawing room to the lift himself, thinking the while of Sir Walter Raleigh spreading his cloak for Queen Elizabeth.

I laughed to myself as I pictured what a knock out that team would have made at a masquerade, with the Prime Minister in the role of Raleigh and Mr. Roosevelt masquerading as Queen Elizabeth.

I'm so glad you have enjoyed the incoming mail and especially the enclosures, I presume, for both were somehow better than this week's batch is likely to turn out. There was much in what you had to say about the artistry of the boy friend in covering such an extent of time so adroitly in a couple of pages. I doubt if he keeps a journal, which is certainly a great pity, but then in such a station, it might be a little difficult to harmonize jotting down what one wanted to and then forever keeping track of the thing to be sure it didn't fall into the wrong hands and perhaps occasion a mild diplomatic flurry.

The card enclosed is from the Lake Lady, I suppose. How is it that everybody stops at the Waldorf. I'm sure they must have some nice guests besides McArthur, Hoover and a flock of wold be society bags.....

0530

5672

Miss's Cave River Country Club

Tuesday, September 16th, 1952.

Mamornandum:

How nice to find your Friday letter in today's post.

Frankly there was a decided surprise element in its arrival, for, as yesterday's memo may have indicated, I had not anticipated that circumstances would enable one to indulge in correspondence before the end of the latest flurry from travelers from the South and the East.

That you should have found time also to make the hejirato 42nd Street was equally unexpected, and although I appreciate all these manifestations of your unflagging kindness, I am fervently "holding the thought" that you may not be expending all your strength on my behalf when so many domestic demands, piled on top the claims of business may eventuate in an over exertion that will enervate you completely.

As for the number of prints, --four, --being ordered, may I say that this amount is most ample. My thought is to make use of the photos of the original sketches for newspaper publication, such as the Picayune. I think the clarity of the original sketch will serve most satisfactorily when appearing in print on pulp paper. For the magazines, however, and especially those like Life or the Ladies Home Journal or the Saturday Evening Post, it seems to me the likeness of the plate itself will serve to better advantage, and particularly as the presence of the personal note on the finished sketch will tend to focus the personality element which may appear in some of the magazine articles. And so, thanks to your thoughtfulness, we are now guaranteed an ample supply of this item and I see no reason why my "desiderata" will occasion further trips to 42nd Street in ever so long.

There were several letters in today's post, but yours was the only one I got around to read throughout. There was an air mail from Carolyn from Chicago, but there was a time pressure that impelled me to read merely the first sentence in each paragraph, simply to determine if anything was suggested about an impending visit within the immediate future, and as I noted nothing along that line, I put the letter along with the other ones, in the armoir for tomorrow's reading.

5673

This morning I assumed the unusual role of road runner, going in to town with Celeste a little after 8 and not returning until afternoon or rather after noon. Celeste wanted me to lend her a hand in seeing about some Christmas cards which she is beginning to think about. She had in mind using the Melrose Plantation plate design, and I dropped in to the office of The Times, thinking that concern could arrange to have a copper block made for the purpose. By good fortune, we met Charles Cunningham just issuing from the building as we approached, and he returned with us. My suggestion was that the Plantation sketch be used, eliminating the script at the bottom, - all save the notation, "Melrose Plantation on Cane River" or whatever appears in the cartouche, and substituting in the place of the script, to right and left of the cartouche, the two words, Merry and Xmas. My thought was to encircle the design with a black line, perfectly round, and have the same printed, --that is the entire design, in black on a white card, more or less square. I think the thing may turn out nicely.

It was nice seeing Charles, --the first time since 1949, but I did not take time out to mention anything about the forth-coming Grandpere article or the anniversary proposed article.

While in town, I took occasion to drop in at Meillsbaugh Drug and collect fifty dollars to be paid against Rock Hall invoices, and to make arrangements for the reception of the Grandpere plate when October 4th arrives. Everyone at the Drug company was so nice. One window is still devoted exclusively to our contrivances, and I was told the same situation would obtain during the pre-holiday season.

Then, while Celeste was shopping, I took occasion to explore the grounds of the Tucker house. The capitols have vanished, but I found in the garden two iron posts that while not precisely a classic harmony, are nevertheless quite unique and rather pretty in detail. I suppose they are 10 or 12 feet in height, the whole business of iron, the columns fluted and the tops capped by modest caps suggesting partially opened acanthus leaves. I doubt if I am able to get them, for I learn from J. H. Henry that J. H. Williams has decided not to buy back the house from the Parish politicians controlling the library. No single individual on the board has the authority to dispose of any of the property, and it is impossible to suppose a quorum would ever agree to dispose of anything wanted or unwanted at any kind of a price. But I shall continue to hold the thought, and if, by some miracle, they should come to hand, I shall set them up temporarily as gate posts to the avant court, reserving them for ultimate disposition at Arenbourg. Urns, --or large earthen jars, planted with ivy and verbeena could be placed atop the columns, and the trailing greenery and flowers would be elegant. But that is counting chicks before the eggs are hatched, still that is fun, too. --D. please go as slow as you can these trying days....

5674

Wednesday, September 17th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I have often thought it might be helpful all around if I were to have a sticker made that could be pasted on much of my out-going mail, reading: "Of No Importance. Read or not, and Miss Nothing."

I could stick one of this and thereby save you a lot of time for something more worth while.

While it occurs to me, let me answer your recent inquiry regarding the number of lists of proposed books sent out by the Library of Congress for selecting those titles to be recorded. These lists are issued about 3 or 4 times a year and not monthly.

And speaking of that department, may I tell you that last night I dipped into "White House Profile" which had recently come to hand, and, as you predicted, I find it a fascinating piece of business. I read only a few pages, up to and including a portion of the doings of Dolley Madison, and enjoyed everything about it, learning much at the same time as I was being entertained. Perhaps the part which struck me with greatest force, --and regret, was the refusal of Congress to grant Jefferson the money to landscape the White House grounds. It wasn't clear to me if he actually sketched out his ideas, but I believe he did. In the monumental publication of the Jefferson papers being acciered out under the Ochs-New York Times grant, I suppose the Jefferson architectural plans and all his sketches will also see the light of publication eventually, and should you ever notice any reference to the Jefferson plans for landscaping the White House, I should be entranced to hear about it.

There wasn't so much mail today, but even so, I didn't finish yesterday's, although I shall before tomorrow has run its course. There seems to be another air mail from Carolyn which I kangaroo-ed but will examine more carefully on the morrow. It would appear from the first sentences read in each paragraph that what she required to get the Melrose article finished and wrapped up was the information I had passed along regarding a potential visit by Life, concerning the St. Augustin matter, and her recognition of the possibility I intentionally threw in, that once as close to Melrose as the bridge, it might be difficult to keep the writers and photographers

5675

from spilling over the garden gate and so find themselves confronted with a story that might appeal to them fully as much as the one to which they had been assigned. In any event, I believe she has sent the manuscript along to the agent, with a view to consulting either Colliers or The Saturday Evening Post. As she expects an acceptance of the thing from either one or the other within two weeks, she anticipates a round at Melrose for pictures sometime in October. If she waits until November, Jack Frost will have withered the greenery, and color pictures won't amount to much until another Spring breaks through again.

Did I mention recently that one of these days I am going to trot out the idea to some publication that the time to take pictures to maximum effect at Melrose might be the early part of February when all the buildings could serve primarily as backdrops for the Chinese magnolias, in full flower at that season.

Turning to political matters, may I say that it has long been my opinion that the preponderance of the electorate makes up their respective minds for which candidate they are going to vote along about these two weeks between the middle of September and the list of October. Somehow I get the impression the political mind has jelled by then and only some unusual heat will put it back into a fluid state. I should guess that as of the moment, Eisenhower probably has an edge on Stevenson and unless something goes completely hay-wire, will probably win. The Governor, I imagine, is emerging too slowly into the minds of the people, although I believe he is picking up votes among the independent voters, although not fast enough, I fear, to stem the Eisenhower tide. The General, on the other hand, is losing votes through the Taft-McCarthy tie up, but not losing them fast enough to wreck his chances within the next six weeks.

I am impressed by the absence of two personalities from the speakers' stands, on each side, -- Mrs. Roosevelt and Mr. Hoover. If, as I assume, neither are playing an important role in public appearances, that is because each side finds his best known member too controversial a figure among the public at large, so that silence may retain votes that might otherwise be set adrift in an uncertain sea.

A note of two sentences from Robina states she was writing it at 7:30 p.m. at the office, meaning she was busy-busy, and that Dr. Miller's address was Coleman Street not Commerce.

From . . . at supper, I learned the older weak offspring is going to Columbia Military Academy here Pat went before his college days. I'm glad for the child to be out from under the parental roof. And now for a glance at "White House Profile" and thence to bed.....

5676 Mrs. Babry 9/16
Carolyn R 9/16
Postell 9/16

Thursday, September 18th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It's Thursday, according to my calendar, but it almost seems as though the calendar could be wrong, as Dr. and Mrs. Knipmeyer weren't able to make it today, and I really missed their little visit.

But there's recompense in everything, and it chanced that during the morning, which I had thought would be busy with guests, a secretary, drenched by excessive dew, passed this way and so I was able to run through quite a lot of mail, but none of it was of much interest. I shall enclose a few samples, although nothing save Carolyn's letter is of any moment. Friend Postelle must be bogged down with his correspondence, too, for, even as I, letter writing shows poor results when too much impinges on one's time.

I continue turning over in my mind what is probably best to do about Ladies Home Journal. Perhaps a letter will come through in a day or so from Richard Pratt that may throw some light on the matter. What with Carolyn's gifts for color photography and writing, the opportunity for her to do the Cane River houses with me seems to hold much by way of promise, -- but only promise. In the first place, Carolyn's utter lack of dependability is to be considered. Then, too, I don't know if the Journal farms out its desired photographic and written work, or if, like Life, they prefer to use their own staff. With Carolyn in Washington, she could easily slide up to Philadelphia for a conference with Herr Pratt, I suppose, and there might be something advantageous in such a meeting. If so, and Carolyn and I were given the assignment, I am wondering if I could count on Carolyn. My guess is in the negative, and yet I find myself wondering if, through such a personal conference, she might eventually secure several assignments for the Gulf States area, -- and if so, -- and if she would carry them out, the whole thing would be extremely advantageous. And yet that little word, "if" be-clouds my thinking processes in this matter. Well, perhaps a letter from Philadelphia may settle the matter, -- I hope.

You will note from Carolyn's letter that she mentions October as a time she may get down this way. As I have perhaps remarked in an earlier Memo, the vegetation isn't getting any greener for color photographs as autumn slides along in the direction of the first frost. Already the countryside has lost its lushness. The week in Waco might have been more profitably spent at Melrose.

5677

5677

But for the life of me, I can't imagine why I carry on so on this point, and I apologize for all the tiresome racket.

I felt unhappy at 2:30 this afternoon when I heard the plantation bell, for when it sounds at other than scheduled times, it means fire. And so it was, but fortunately of little consequence. Mr. Earnest's armchair was blazing merrily and filling the house with smoke, suggesting a real conflagration. It would have been just too much to have had another home go up in smoke after such a short interim since the one this Spring. I chanced to be at the front gate when the bell sounded but maintained my course in the general direction of Yucca, and never did hear any particulars other than the bare fact mentioned above.

I am hoping Ed. Morrow doesn't get in the habit of giving us tape recordings of speeches in the news too often. Two or three times of late he has indulged in this first hand dispensing of ideas by giving the voice of the person direct, but, for myself, I prefer Mr. Morrow's reports and opinions in place of undigested evidence. What with the Nixon acceptance of several thousand dollars from California business men for expenses during the past two years, Mr. Nixon seems to be out on a limb, but, since he has been a Senator living in Washington during that time, perhaps he is part of the mess that Mr. Eisenhower promises to clean up, but surely there must be confusion and shame faces in the ranks of the Republicans tonight, not to mention subdued smiles and a bit of glee on the part of the Democrats. Mr. Nixon will have to squirm adroitly if, henceforth, as the prize hachet man of the Republican "team", he can still that same "holier than thou" line he has been reeling off at such a great rate since "Chicago. Thus Mr. Eisenhower is handed a hot potato which he may very well try to ignore but once the over warm vegetable begins to burn, it may provoke twists and turns that will not impress the electorate too favorably. Poor Mr. Eisenhower, if he had only accepted the Democratic nomination to begin with, he would not find himself in smooth seas, for Taft would be his opponent and would represent no particular problem.

In the Mabry note, the question as to what was done today about the Tucker property cannot be answered, for nothing was done, and what its fate will be, nay or may not be decided within the near future. I continue to "hold the thought" regarding the collonettes, hoping that eventually "faith" will move not mountains but pillars, --and in the right direction.

It is so pleasantly warm tonight and the stars so beautiful, I feel a musical coming on. I think Peter Illyovitch will go so nicely with the heavy fragrance of butterfly lilies spilling over the gallery from the white garden. I'll be thinking of little Miss Lee.

5678

Ans Storm 9/14
Stelle (?) 9/14

Friday, September 19th, 1952.

Memorandum;

How nice, following the surprise of earlier in the week, to find your Wednesday air mail in this morning's post.

How you found time to knock it off, --what with all the busy hours that clog up your days, I can't imagine. But it was so kind of you to jot down so many interesting points, only in reference to the Salem paper, please, I beg you, don't undertake any transcribing until months, --the holidays, in fact, are finished.

By the way, speaking of Salem, I recall how surprised I was the first time my attention was called to the origin of that word, for I had never before thought of the Pilgrims as having clipped off the first part of Jerusalem until I read in a year or so ago in some book or other about the Salem colony in Massachusetts.

I am so glad you didn't have to get mixed up with the air borne travelers from down yonder, and I am hoping that your determination to relax a little at home about the time they arrived did not end up by wearing yourself out in undertaking a million things while the coast was clear.

It goes without saying that I was all ears about the "wishful thinking" department, and I hold the thought that something may eventuate in that direction. Wouldn't it be wonderful all the way around. Every once in a million years transpires that seems to delight everybody and somehow this seems like a promise for just that sort of realization.

So often I contemplate a situation that has dragged along over so many months, wherein everyone concerned is effected by some sort of an enervation that comes with seeming futility, and I know not for which member of such a group one owes the most consideration, what with everyone so definitely effected, but in such different ways. How surprising a twist it would be if the mere wishful thinking should eventually emerge into a reality.

I laughed at what you had to say about certain people possibly not recognizing each other. I can't imagine it, for my part, and neither can I imagine it for your part either, in proof whereof you actually did recognize the Scientific section readily enough at a glance.

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I'm so glad you are planning to break bread together once of these days, and something tells me you are both going to have to talk fast-fast, even to touch on subject matter, so long left dormant. I hadn't heard that the concern with which she had formerly been associated had moved, which, somehow, seems almost as odd as though somebody said R. H. Macy moved to Hoboken, or some such.

I remember her brother, whose health seemed so indifferent when he was in this country. I shall be interested to learn what news she has to pass along. Were I to join you both at luncheon, I probably would draw up a list of the whole 48th Street staff and so run through the list of personalities, some of whom have undoubtedly almost faded out of the picture completely in the years between. Off hand, my guess is that Lestan 2nd has vanished more completely than all for all save one.

It certainly was kind of you to let me know about the Cane River prints. There is no vast rush for them but when they do come to hand, I shall put one of them to use, holding the others for subsequent employment.

And as I write that last sentence, it occurs to me that I had better to go to town again next week to see Editor Cunningham. As a printer, I suppose he might have connections with manufacturers of stationary. How would it be to have some Cane River stationary made, using the map, --perhaps the entire plate, for a design, covering the entire sheet of stationary in an exceedingly subtle sepia coloring, so faint as to be noticeable only if glanced at a second time. If this can be done, and I know it can, for Penland has some stationary done in that manner, but with a figure of a woman spinning or weaving, --and after it has been done, then use the Watchitoches Times to call it to the attention of the public, and although nobody in the Parish ever writes letters, still, if persuaded the use of such stationary would be patriotic on a Parish scale, it might at least be disposed of in gift form. As this idea has just unfolded in my mind, I shall ponder it further and speak of it again after I have worked it out.

You will be amused to know that Secretary in Confidence, -- Ezra's boy, Lee, invariably, on reaching your signature, reads it slightly backwards, saying: "Three". He had just said "Three" tonight, when an interruption came and I did not get to your clipping which will afford me pleasure on the morrow.

So many things to talk about, so many little streaks of rose through the cloud coverage on the horizon, holding the promise of another day's eventual dawning regardless.....

5680

Sunday, September 21st, 1952.

Memorandum: Such a pleasant week end, still dry but cool in the evening, and mercy of mercies, not many pilgrims.

And those who did pass this way were civilized, --the Crowells of Alexandria who brought the Chases from California with them. The Crowells are lumber people, I believe, with seeds of money but not cursed by its care. I had met them a few times at suppers under the cedars and it was pleasant renewing the acquaintance.

I was interested to learn from Mr. Crowell that Dr. Rand is Alexandria's dominant Republican. That would be like Dr. Rand, for while others like James McLeMore and Governor Kennon are actually Republicans but masquerading as Democrats, Dr. Rand, if a believer in Republicanism, would be a Republican regardless and would care not at all who knew it.

All doctors, I suppose, must be inclining toward the Eisenhower camp anyway, what with that gentleman's statement that he is opposed to health insurance and so on. I should like to know where the lady doctor stands, but I imagine she give politics very little thought. Fortunately, it's the patients who elect the President and not the physicians, --a fact that the Republicans don't seem to have sensed as yet, and the Democrats have done nothing about.

What with peace pervading the plantation last night, I was able to do a bit of my Saturday night reading, and I got the White House Profile up as far as the election of McKinley. It certainly is an interesting volume and represents no end of research. I am always happy at the amount of political data that is included, sometimes, perhaps it was tucked in as filler, but whatever the reason, the material is interesting. Somewhere in the chapter on the Grant administration, reference is made to the Credit Mobilier scandal that rocked Congress in those years, but I could find no reason for the appearance of that point in the book, as constructed, since there seems to be no tie-in with the subject under discussion in that particular chapter.

I intended mentioning the Storm letter in my last Memo, but

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reached the end of the page before touching on it. I thought you would like the story la Storm had to tell about the servant who said, after having two accounts called to his attention, declared that was all the crookedness he had engaged in during the absence of his mistress on the West Coast.

It reminded me of a parallel episode that happened to Celeste a few years ago. Some people came unexpectedly for lunch one day, and she dashed to the ice box to open a can of Spam, --but it just wasn't there. Mat Burden was a sort of house-man--gardener for Celeste at the time, and she jumped on him for having swiped it. He swore he hadn't lifted it, and to clinch the point, he declared:

"No, M'am, I sure ain't borrowed that there Spam. That sure is God's truth 'cause I kaint tole nothin from your ice box since the last can of sypup I lifted better than two weeks back."

Up to that moment, Celeste hadn't missed the syrup.

I declined an invitation to Magnolias this afternoon. About this time of year, it is their custom to have a party for old Rose, the cook, and usually quite a few white people who dine on Rosa's fare at the big house during the year, join in celebrating her birthday which is usually arranged fairly easily, form point of view of date, since Rosa herself hasn't any notion as to which month that blessed event transpired when she made her initial bow into this world. The party is usually held at Rosa's cabin, near the brick quarters, with much food being served, with an emphasis on cake and whiskey. Celeste took the three Reverend Fathers from across the River and was back by first dark, reporting a fine time having been had by all.

I learned both ladies from across the fence head out for South Louisiana on Friday of this week, "adam Regard going as far as Mansura while Celeste will travel on to New Iberia or where ever it is the Sugar Festival is being held. I suppose they will return early in the week.

I ran across a new word in my reading a while back. It was pronounced as though it might be spelled, --"Eedenism", and means the indulging of one's self in selfish pleasures. Once I inquired asked if anyone next door could find the word for me in the dictionary, but fortunately it was convenient at the time, and in view of what I think the definition is, it was perhaps just as well we didn't get around to looking it up, --and it goes without saying I shall not bring up the matter again at that point.

I have thought of little Miss Lee so often over this week end, hoping that like Lestan, her Saturday and Sunday held a little measure of solitary pleasure, too.....

0833

5682

Carl Harness
at Sept 1952
Lucy Morgan 9/15

Monday, September 22nd, 1952.

Memorandum: How nice to find the prints in today's post. I am astonished at how speedily they came through. It seems to me such envelopes generally require 6 days, and if so, this one seems to have broken all records. And marvelous to relate, the envelope arrived just as flat as when you posted it, and the prints are perfect for what I have in mind. I think the print will lend itself nicely to reproduction on paper used by better grades of paper, as used by Ladies Homes Journal, and if the medallion type of thing can be worked out for stationary, they will serve that end to perfection, too. May I say Thank you, and pin several oak leaf clusters about your person for the endless nice things you are forever doing for me.

And speaking of the stationary, I am enclosing a letter from your friend, Miss Lucy, which you will enjoy running through, and, although I am not sure about it, I am under the impression this sheet may have that subtle touch of design on it, but the yellow bulbs I use to ward off insects, seems to have concealed the design completely from me at the moment, and it may turn out that this chances to be a blank sheet anyway, save for the print at the top and the typing beneath.

And having spoken of stationary to such length, I might as well turn to the Journal of the Ladies, since I dragged that publication into the above paragraph somehow.

Oran telephoned me today, reporting she had just received a letter from Richard Pratt of the same L.H. Journal, in which he said that she had made Melrose sound so fascinating he had decided he would like to concentrate on that place for publication, and that as he had known Lyle Saxon and Alexander Woocott, he was doubly moved to do something about the place. He opined that he would make a round "this winter" and would bring Mrs. Pratt with him, "as she sometimes helps me with my work", and he made inquiry as to housing possibilities in the Cane River Country....

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Naturally, I shall use this information to advantage, I hope, on Carolyn, although the season really, in view of the prolonged drought, is much too late to secure pictures suggesting the lush greens and the floral contrasts that would have been so impressively abundant last May.

If Mr. Pratt has February in mind for a Winter go-round, that should be perfect from the point of view of Chinese magnolias, but if he plans anything in advance of that month, he is going to bump into the same barrenness of greenery that little Miss Ramsey has dwaddled about to jockey herself into with such maladroitness.

Early this evening the radio announced that Mr. Nixon will make a public confession tomorrow night over the air. Immediately following that program, there was an interruption to bring a new bulletin from Los Angeles that Mr. Nixon was withdrawing. I was panic-stricken, for naturally I am hoping he will remain the Vice Presidential candidate. For my impression is that he will give Mr. Stephenson a heap more votes by staying on the Eisenhower ticket. The 10 o'clock news repeated the confessional angle, and so I take it the Los Angeles report was merely a rumor.

I think I neglected to report on Friday, that according to a decision made by Parish authorities on Thursday last past, the Tucker property will be retained by the Parish, the property swept clean of its old house and other ante-bellum evidences, and a new library constructed on the site. On Saturday J. A. came to tell me that he had contacted the contractor in charge of demolition and disposal of the "trash", destined to be sold as firewood and filler for the bayou. There was a significant gleam in his eye when he remarked that he had spoken to the contractor of my interest in "those old posts".

I believe the new broom will start sweeping clean, as it were, about the middle of October, after which we shall see what we shall see. In the mean time, I am planting ivy and verbeena in big pots, just in case the avant cour eventually becomes the sight, -- instead of the bayou, -- of the strange pillars from the past.

I was late in tuning in on Lux Radio, and although I recognized the piece as Beerkley Square, discovered they called it "I'll Ever Forget You".....

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5684 *Joane L. Mignol 9/9/52*

Tuesday, September 23rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

The weather continues wonderful, with a pleasant 80 at sunset and an invigorating 60 at dawn. But as man is never quite satisfied, I must say we could stand just a dab of moisture.

The enclosure contains nothing in particular, but I send it along regardless. The answer to the question about the letters, of course, is in the negative. As for the book mentioned in the letter, I never heard of it, but I telephoned the library to send one out for me to look at. If the author is Stewart Landry, I shall inspect the thing with reservations, for Steart Landry is a racial bigot who got out that book that out-did Herr Goebels a few years back. I think it was called "The Cult of Equality" or some such, and I recall the Madam tossed it out as so much rubbish.

It occurred to me, on reading the clippings which I returned to Mrs. Sterling, that some organization in Natchitoches ought to sponsor a lecture by the lady on Audubon, and so I set the wheels turning forthwith. I acknowledged the lady's letter and asked for details regarding her illustrated discourse and if she would like to harangue one or another of the Natchitoches societies. I suppose she will jump at the opportunity, since it will afford her excellent publicity for the cause for which she strives.

In spite of the fine weather, the pilgrimage business seems off, thank heavens. That doesn't mean to say I am without such matters, but the pressure isn't nearly so great as in boiling or freezing weather, which somehow seems a little odd.

This afternoon the wealthy Albert Stevensons from somewhere up Briarwood way, came, bringing some Rio Grande people with them. Mrs. Stevenson was finished at Ward-Belmont in the same class with Celeste. They are wonderfully alike. I still puzzle over what hour such people think plantation folks eat. The obvious answer, of course, is that they don't think.

But aside from being annoyed at them for coming at such an hour, I must say I was delighted on one point, -- the hummingbirds put on a wonderful show for their benefit around the feeding bottle suspended on St. Giggins' shoulder. There were half a dozen waiting their turn and one of them, apparently tired of waiting, rose slowly from the line and perched on my shoulder to rest. The Stevensons and their guests were enchanted.

1882

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Of course I listened tonight to Senator Nixon's speech until he exceeded the purchased time and was cut off.

As a political speech, it was undoubtedly worth the \$75,000.00 paid the Columbia net work. As the whole business was supposed to be concerned with the \$18,000.00 kick-in, it seemed to me beside the point that somebody gave him a dog whom his 6 year old daughter named Chunkie or some such; that his wife is Irish and born on Saint Patrick's Day and so on. But that is probably good politics even though it has nothing to do with the matter in question. As for myself, I haven't the slightest idea if Al Capone, for example, ever so much as had a wife, let alone when her birthday may have been, and whether the mobster had any offspring and what they might have named their dog.

And then I am sick and tired of cheap politicians who quote one statement and proceed to twist it into another meaning, as for example, the way Nixon quoted the Democratic Chairman as saying that if Nixon couldn't live on his salary as a Senator he ought to quit, and then, in the next sentence, Nixon turning the thin around and declaring that the Democratic Chairman thinks only millionaires should be elected Senators. I thought it equally glaring that while calling on all candidates to give a financial statement over the air as he had been forced to do by his own Republican Party, he thought Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Sparkman should do so, and if they didn't it was because they didn't dare, --while in calling on them to do this, he never mentioned Mr. Eisenhower as being in line for a like statement.

I think Mr. Nixon has persuasion in his speech, the same kind of persuasion that so many people in the Republican Party, for some unknown reason, have, --persuasion with something sinister about it, and somehow concealing a metallic quality of inhumanity that always seems to go along with politicians who set property rights above human, --the same type of people who tried to get a famous sentence to read, before the document was accepted: -- "life, liberty and property instead of pursuit of happiness."

Well, as must be evident by now, my eyelids are beginning to grow heavy and sleep is "coming down" as the local expression has it.

It has been such a pretty day, the Arenbourg gourds look so nice, and I have thought of little Miss Lee so often between waking and now.....

1882

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Mr. Robinson 9/24
Gra 9/24
Janet Miller 9/24

Wednesday, September 24th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I send along the enclosures for what they are worth which isn't much.

Just confess to you that when I saw the envelope from Martha Robinson, I found myself instinctively asking myself what in the world she could want, since she apparently knows how to write only when in need of something. I like her ever so much as an individual but I have scant patience with her refusal to write.

And after reading her letter, I realized perfectly well that the real excuse for her visit is not to find data on Philadelphia Nolan but to provide an entrance for Stewart Landry who has been dogging me too long about coming to explore the Melrose library, consult the Isaac Erwin diary and so forth and so on. Little Miss Martha may consult the scrapbooks as long as she pleases for data on Miss Philadelphia, --what a name, --but Herr Landry won't get to first base on the Isaac Erwin diary since it is under lock and key in a place to which he will not have access during his visit.

The letter from Friend Miller was nice, --the longest I can remember seeing from her in ever so long, if indeed ever. I am under the impression she is at tag ends, not too entranced with Marlin but perhaps uncertain as to where she would like to find herself. So far as I know, she has never been in Alaska or Australia, and I'm inclined to think some indistinct but exceedingly remote horizon is what is beckoning to her. Hers is one of those personalities that never takes root any place, thereby making it easier for her to fly from Chicago to Brussels, to Oxford, the Congo, Tokio, Shanghai, the Caspian Sea and heaven alone knows where, --just so long as she never has the impression she is going to stay long in a place. I never heard of anyone suffering from terrestrial claustrophobia but I think she does, and I think she avoids getting very much interested in any place in which she chances to find herself, knowing full well that the moment she experiences the sensation of her roots reaching down into the soil, she cannot resist the impulse to be-stir herself and pull out, --and in which particular direction doesn't matter much. Poor anchorless soul, and wearied by the tempest of the years.

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I am certainly proud of nothing I have accomplished today. The continued drought makes it wise to keep hoses running and I find such employment on the tedious side. I had intended taking time out to do a little writing but what with hogs to be chased out of the canas and depredations to be looked into where a family of armadillos had been burrowing into the Phillipine lilies, I never did get around to so much as glance in Dr. Underwood's direction.

Second thoughts on last night's Nixon broadcast find me forming a strange triangle in my mind, --Roosevelt, Hitler and Nixon. There was that God given quality about F. D. R.'s voice that was somehow persuasive without ever seeming to be. There was the hysterical fanaticism about Hitler's that must have made millions of his listeners believe he was telling the truth, he seemed so frantic about it, although his knowing deceit could have fooled nobody who paused to think. Nixon falls somewhere between these two, -- with a good radio voice and chicanery cloaked in seeming righteousness, and I have no doubt this combination of attributes will impress many a voter favorably. At 37 Mr. Nixon has age in his favor for a long journey down the years. I hope he never makes the White House for it is obvious from the type of friends he keeps, he would make frantic efforts to "set the clock back", and surely that would be a calamity.

In all this business, I am a little puzzled by Mr. Eisenhower. I can readily understand how he can string along with the Tafts during the campaign but it does seem to me he is overdoing his enthusiasm over Nixon, but that may be due to poor direction. One up-shot of all the excitement that floors me is the fact that after having done as much listening as I have, I still am quite in the dark about the \$18,000.00 and why it never was reported on income tax returns. I assume, however, that the legislative boys long ago saw to it that there would be ample loop holes for themselves when they drew up the income tax laws.

On the home front, the ladies are as busy as bees, making preparations to get themselves beautified in town tomorrow in anticipation of taking off for South Louisiana on Friday. They are leaving in the morning, so Madam Regard can be in Mansura by noon, and Celeste can head out alone for New Iberia tomorrow to get there before evening, for there is to be dancing in the streets and no end of gaiety. Isn't it pitiful.....

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Carolyn Ramsey 9/10/52
Kenneth 9/10/52
Madam Regard 9/11/52

Thursday, September 25th, 1952.

Memoandum:

The best thing I have heard today was what Elmer Davis remarked in his broadcast. I don't recall the precise wording, but it was to the effect that he hoped those dreadful Democrats really don't take away the dog given the Nixon children, as their papa seemed to fear when making his bank statement the other night.

I put a couple of pamphlets in this morning's mail, -- second class. You might throw away the envelope, as I pated 908 over the address by which the item came to hand. You may have the Penland folder but I sent it along regardless. I know not what the Oakley pamphlet contains but thought you might enjoy turning through it. Don't bother to save either on my account.

With this memo, I shall send along a few letters of no particular interest but they will serve to keep you informed as to how things rock along various pathways.

On the plantation front, the cotton continues to roll, but much of the harvesting is done by day laborers who come out from town each morning, transported back and forth in a school bus which J. H. rounded upon heaven knows where.

I must remark upon the seasonal manifestation, peculiar, in a way, which begins exerting itself about this time of year. During July and August there is usually quite a bit of evidence of short tempers, perhaps on everyone's part, but noticeable especially in doings at gatherings in the honkey-tonks. With the cooling off of the full summer heat, there follows a succession of domestic squabbles that always crop up at this page of the calendar. As these days are the ones wherein the laborer makes or does not make a harvest of the fruits of his labor, it is particularly telling, --these seasonal domestic disturbances.

An excellent case in point is the household of the Dark Duke. Just as cotton opened for picking, the Dark Duchess

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withdrew from the family hearth. She was gone about a month, which means she did not participate in rounding up the cash which is so abundantly available at just this time.

Another case is that of her sister, --Ezra's wife and mama of my secretary. Ezra's family makes a crop on shares, the planation allotting them so much acreage on which they can raise a crop and harvest it by themselves. As the family includes several children old enough to pick, --my secretary, for example, over 6 feet in height at 14, --the moeny is actually made at the harvesting of the crop, and especially is this true if the family has done all the hoeing of the crop earlier in the season. The plantation charges against the crop are placed on dusting, spraying, ploughing, etc., but as J. A. seems very fair in such matters, the margin of profit for the crop maker is rather generous. At the present time, the plantation pays \$3.00 a hundred pounds for picking. About 15,00 pounds of cotton with its seed is required to make a 500 pound bale. Now just at the point of harvesting, Ezra's wife took all the children and went to stay at Puny's house, after having picked but one bale of cotton. Naturally the plantation cannot leave the cotton in the field, and so town day laborers are set to work on the virgin staple. As the picking of each bale cost about \$45.00, you can readily see how all profit for the Ezra family begins evaporating. Even though the expenses involved in getting the crop into production be fair, in the present case, there are other deductions to be made for money advanced during the season, such as \$500.00 advanced during the summer for repairs on the car which Ezra's wife wrecked, --and Lo! by the time the account is totaled, there is mighty little profit for those who have tilled the soil all summer, but threw away their opportunity by sulking when harvest time arrived. If the scientists would only hurry up and discover a miracle drug that would put some sense into peoples heads, that would be wonderful.

Ezra, who works at the gin, keeps on working but gets more glum from day to day. Fugabou who finds himself in a like domestic situation reacts differently by staying drunk for days on end. I marvel at A. H.'s patience in such matters, for he takes it all, and a hundred other annoyances all in his stride.

On the Arenb urg front, the leaves of the gourd vines are beginning to shrivel and die. It is time for them to do so, but I'm leaving the fruit on the vines until the latter are completely dry, after which I shall dry the fruit in the sun and then wax them for their better preservation. Must read a little now from The Savannah, and then fold.....

1832

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Laughlin 9/22
Mr. Crayer 9/22

Friday, September 26th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The lovely weathr continues with everone save the gin workers making the most of it, since cotton picking slacks off about 10 o'clock on Friday and is forgotten from then on until Monday. It is a striking thing that the plantation laborers disdain a full week's work at a time when of all season's of the year, there is an 8 weeks period when money rolls easily. In a way, their attitude seems a little short sighted to me, but perhaps at the end of the journey they will have made the jaunt to as much personal satisfaction as the more industrious.

I was glad to see Ed Rand today. He drove up to see me this afternoon, having nothin in particular on his mind but merely wanting to chat a little. I reckon he staid an hour or so, and we covered everything from his grandmother's health, which seems to be ultra delicate to the latest twist in politics, especially Republican politics, for I gather he inclines toward his father's position in that matter.

I welcomed his arrival, for I had just finished designing a new plate, --the African House,--and I was glad to turn my mind to something else, and Ed Rand is a stimulating conversationalist.

I had thought of going into the woods to round up some golden rod for week end bouquets but I never did make it. I can do that on the morrow at dawning.

And speaking of golden rod reminds me that it is a plant particularly devastating to most sufferers from hay fever. And that reminds me that the Baptist minister passed this way with some Texas friends the other day, and I remarked upon his sniffing and weeping. It ~~is~~ seems he is a victim of hay fever, and although I said nothing to me about it, naturally, still I was turning over in my o n mind that hay fever must rank as an industrial hazard for people in his profession. After all, most marriages and funerals I have attended in my life seem to have been pretty heavily buttressed with bouquets, and this factor must present quite a problem to a person who devotes his life to tying marital knots and presiding over the last rites for the departed. Of all afflictions for a preacher, this seems to be about the most annoying, I should imagine.

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There was a note from Madam Crager which I shall try to track down and enclose herewith. If you will kindly try to remember her address, I shall appreciate it, for I am under the impression I shall be writing her again before long, although at the moment I can't think just why. Perhaps it is something about publishing, although I think the Crager imprint would not suit the Malrose manuscript precisely, but it may be handy to have the address regardless. I think the name of the street is the most hilarious I ever ran across. If you will pardon the pun, it all sounds so "zimple".

I waded through a couple more pages of The Savannah last night but I have again shelved it today, for the mail brought me volume 4 of the Churchill opus which I want to read forthwith, and also to hand came the book having to do with Franklin's sister, which I want to dip into next, --and the Savannah, like Old Man River will always be jus' rollin' along.

Across the fence, I am told, the ladies were up and into the big road at about the same hour when they departed with little Miss Lee when she departed. Long since, I expect, before tonight's new moon was lighting the White Garden, the dancing in the streets of New Iberia was going full tilt and Marie Antoinette, poor child, was trying to kid herself into thinking she had found momentary happiness which, after all, perhaps isn't so much ersatz for her after all, since, if she meant what she said a while back, "dancing is one of the important things in life".

An episode in politics came up for discussion during Ed Rand's visit, and by chance J. A. mentioned the same matter at supper. James Maclemore who sold his business for four hundred thousand dollars to get himself elected Governor of Louisiana last year now admits he dumped the whole 400 thousand into his unsuccessful effort. And so he is now signed up with the Eisenhower forces in the State and is trying to engineer Louisiana for the General in hopes that he may re-gain by Republican appointment what he lost in his unsuccessful Democratic splurge. What a business this political hocus-fokus thing is. There was one remark at supper, too, that is worth pondering on:

Did you ever stop to think that the 18,000 dollars of Nixon's, is probably not a drop in the bucket when stacked up along what he has undoubtedly received from a flock of sources, -- the \$18,000.00 merely being what he got caught up with.....

5692

Sunday, September 28th, 1952.

Memorandum:

PLANTATION LIFE IN LOUISIANA

The Melrose Scrapbook

I guess that ought to be the title for which we have been casting about. How does it strike you.

The weather has been pure Indian Summer this week end, and yet in spite of its promise of felicity for road-running, there hasn't been too great a crush of pilgrims.

Martha Robinson with the Landrys, came Saturday morning, and we had a pleasant hour or two together, with a rather quick tour to begin with, followed by conversation at Yucca.

Stewart Landry expressed himself as having never envisioned anything half so wonderful as Melrose in all Louisiana. He and Martha prayed me to get busy and do a book on the place. I said nothing. They presented me with the new Landry opus, --"Plantation Life Along the Mississippi. The title gave me an idea. I continued to say nothing on that score. It was noon when they left and they chanced to meet J. A. at the front gate. Mr. Landry, a descendant of Jose Erwin, remarked upon their kinship, and both he and Martha admonished J. A. to realize Melrose is one of the wonders of Louisiana.

After they had departed, the thought struck me that the same house which published the Landry volume might do a Plantation Series, and "~~Plant~~ Plantation Life in Louisiana" might just as well be the second volume in the series.

I shall write Daisey in the Dell forthwith, asking her to return the manuscript. There will be nobody to help me arrange it in proper sequence, but that is merely a detail, and to it, I shall add the glossy prints of the Cane River Country and the Grandpere plates, don't you think so. And after that, or rather before that, I shall write the publishers of the Landry Opus, --I suppose it may be the Pelican Press, and see what is what.

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I was up and doing this morning at 3:30, having in mind the day would probably be fairly busy, and wanting to get some of the Sunday mail knocked off before the sun got up. I took occasion to act on an idea which occurred to me sometime during the night when I awoke to find my radio going full tilt, and broadcasting some silly business from a New Orleans night club. There seemed to be a lady master of ceremonies and during her chatter, some mention was made of the 150 anniversary celebration of the Louisiana Purchase. That was all I needed to impell me to write a letter to the French Ambassador, along lines as indicated in the duplicate letter attached. You might remove Lestan's name if that seems advisable, but the duplicate might be saved for eventual reference, should anything ever come of it.

If France will dig up a Louis XIV statue, I shall get busy enlisting the services of the Natchitoches Times to inaugurate a campaign to have the city provide a site and the citizens to raise a fund for a suitable base for the statue.

It is really amazing when one stops to think of it that not a statue exists in Louisiana for its name sake. As a starter to commemorate such name-sakes, this move, if successful, ought to provide lots of copy for various publications, I should imagine. I don't suppose there is any chance this idea would be emulated by people living in other states who might feel the impulse to erect statues to the name sakes of their respective commonwealths. Now let's see how that would start, if it ever got going: - Maine would erect a statue to the Duc de Maine, New York would erect one to James 2nd, who, as brother of Charles 2nd, was Duke of York in whose honor the colony was named. Pennsylvania already has plenty of statues to old Sir William Penn. Maryland could set one up for Queen Mary, wife of William, I guess, of William and Mary fame, Virginia could get going on Queen Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen. I don't know if the Carolinas were named after anybody named Caroline, -- I guess there was a Queen at a latter period by that name, but I assume Carolina is some kind of a corruption of Charles; and then there is one of the King Georges for Georgia to do something about. Off hand, the State of Washington is the only other remaining unnamed State honoring an individual, but I suppose that State has plenty of likenesses of G. Washington, Esquire.

In the case of the Louisiana project, the present French Ambassador will have to be a heap different from most French Governmental officials I have known, if he bothers to do anything about the idea, but it does no harm to start the ball rolling, whether one gets any cooperation or not.

Of course I left out Delaware as a potential statue erector, but that's alright. For all I know Nebraska may have been a person once, too.

P.S.

I'm withholding enclosures for addresses.

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Monday, September 29th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It has been a lovely day, but even without pilgrims, it seems to have been a long one, so far as gardening activities are concerned, with the net result that something tells me I shall not take long to start "resting my eyes", after this little chat with you.

First off, --and I feel shame faced to mention this, -- I am wondering if, between now and the 1st of February, you might run across a copy of Aunt Benjamin's letter for me. It has been so long since I read it, and I guess the only time I ever did hear it there were so many interruptions during the Madam's reading, that I have but a hazy notion of its contents. Still, I am under the impression it was excellent, and it occurs to me I might use it for one of the Cane River reflections.

I guess I have outlined for you what method I propose to employ in doing the thing for the anniversary number of the Times. If not, I shall report that I have in mind calling the whole piece Cane River Reflections, and then break the thing into sections, each section containing 3 or 4 typed pages, and numbering them 1, 2, 3 and so on. In this way, there is a chance that I can toss off that much material on a given subject before an interruption knocks at my door and sends the balance of whatever I have in mind into the middle of next week. But if I make use of a vastly modified form, along Churchill War Memoire lines, there will be no need for the usual continuity, and possibly the breaking up of the symposium into fragments will make the whole thing more readable, too.

The whole thing is style rather nebular in my mind, --what I shall say and how I shall say it, but perhaps it will start off with a light discussion as to just what Cane River is and how it got that way, geographically. Perhaps the No. 2 section could be given over to the brief statement as to why Cane River is different from all other streams from the St. Lawrence to the Rio Grande. No. 3 might be something about early colonization. No. 4 might be given over to a couple of brief aspects on white civilization along the river, -- and Aunt Benjamin's letter ought to be just the checker to demonstrate the better side of ante bellum culture. The rest of the business will unroll from that point, and end up with some personal remarks about

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various personalities, such as the "adam's and a sampling of
the straws in the wind to see which way the river is going from
here on out.

But please don't let the Aunt Benjamin thing worry you. I
am under the impression you may have a copy of it. If you have,
and could let me have a copy by the 1st of February, that would be
ample time. If you don't have it, or if it will not be likely
you will be able to get it by the 1st of February, just play I
didn't say anything. I can easily enough cite some other example
of Pindhome doings to make the point I have in mind, --or, I can
even change my mind.

I have given some thought today regarding Pelican Press doing
our book. I think I see a few advantages, in that the Pelican might
push the thing with greater vigor in the Gulf States area than would
the salesmen of a larger publishing house located outside the Gulf
area, and since the major portion of sales will be in Texas, Louisiana
and Mississippi, the amount of sales might be favorable to those
larger trans-Gulf corporations possessed of longer new titles and
rather longer lists of new publications. Perhaps all this is
wishful thinking, but perhaps, on the other hand, there is some
reasonable figuring in such ponderings. For all I know, Pelican
may not be interested anyway, but I have written Daisy in the Dell
to send the manuscript regardless, and we shall eventually see what we
shall see. I have also written Martha Robinson, asking her for the
address of Pelican, --and for all I know, Stewart Landry may somehow
be associated with the concern. I think I didn't do much of a
thumbnail sketch of him or his wife. They were alright, sort of
50-ish and vastly interested in white civilization of the ante bellum
period. I suppose it was Pelican, perhaps, who published The
Boston Club and what was that other thing of Landry's, oh, yes,
The Cult of Quality, which is just as near the opposite of anything
I would do about people of color as any one could stir up. Perhaps
Mr. Landry needs some education about people of color, --so many
people living in Louisiana do.

From the terse note from the Picayune, you will notice the
"flying saucer" business will get a going over on Sunday, October 12th.
We know what the illustrations may be like, --at least, I assume we
do, but what the text is going to set forth, I have no idea, and I
shudder to think of what La Holloman may or may not have contrived when
she made the final licks at the initial manuscript which was dictated
to her in large measure in the midst of much hubbub.

This must make mighty dull reading and I apologize for same.
And let Aunt Benjamin be dull, too, so far as giving you the slightest
worry until one day, four months hence, you chance to stumble over her,
and if you don't, it's still perfectly alright....

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Tuesday, September 30th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Thirty million times would be altogether inadequate to
say how surprised and entranced I was to find your most elegant
letter of Thursday, together with a registered package, coming
in perfect condition, in this morning's post.

How sweet of little Miss Lee to remember Arenbourg
so magnificently, and something or other in that direction is
going to unfold in some mighty pretty fashion as a result,
what with planting the just in the offing, but as to just
what form it will take, I haven't as yet decided. But I shall
be going into detail on that point one of these days, as I
am already making preparations for a dozen different undertakings
as soon as Jack Frost has made a round and the November rains have
softened the metallic condition of the soil. In the
mean time, how much pleasure I am going to experience as I
rest for a few moments from my daily chores and find time to
envision what next will be on the docket.

It was so noble of you to make the transcript, and, frankly,
I am floored by the extent of the article which I had not
realized was so long. Perhaps, in glancing at it in print
form, I missed a few columns when estimating the extent of the
thing.

I am picturing you chained to your desk contending with the
work at a time when you might have been on a frolic in the
open air. In a way, I imagine an excuse to get out of going
had a touch of the genuine desire to be alone for an evening,
but if only there hadn't been all the labor attached to the
evening when sheer rest would have been so timely.

And while I think of it, --and let me hasten to mention it
right now, --please don't pay any attention to the Aunt Benjamin
transcript, for I shall not need it after all, and I hope this
letter, traveling hard on the heels of the one that went forward
today, will reach you before you have completely passed out at the
thought of having to look up the letter mentioned in
yesterday's memo.

.....

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Under most pleasant circumstances, I had a conference with Editor Cunningham this morning and we discussed the whole matter of the article, as to scope. I gathered he had been giving the matter thought, following a desire on the part of a feature writer to do the Joyous Coast neighborhood. That delighted me, although I had simply inferred that possibility as he spoke on some matter. He then asked me how much of the river I wanted to do, and I told him I preferred sticking to home base as much as possible, although I should be glad to encompass the whole stream if that would be to his liking. He said he didn't want me to trim my impulses in the slightest degree, and that I could have the whole thing if I wished it. Naturally I said I would be content with concentrating on just this bend of the river. And so I shall not need the Aunt Benjamin business but like an old hen, half resting in the dust and flicking her feathers full of loose soil, I can scuffle around in the melrose earth and kick up a few morsels of dirt that will annoy a few readers, delight a few, and go over the heads of most,-- after which, like the well self-dusted chicken, I can stand up and shake my feathers and get on with the next problem.

The Mayor came in for a little chat and threatened to call on me one of these fine Indian Summer evenings, but Charles and I got our heads together again on one or two other projects and I spoke to him about the idea of a statue of Louis XIV for Natchitoches. He was knocked over, as he said, when it dawned on him for the first time that Louisiana had never had a statue of its name sake, but said he wondered how in the world the thought had come to me, since it apparently had never dented any other brain. I told him it probably had occurred to millions of people but that nothing had ever been done about it. He said he was quite sure that he was not among the millions who had thought of it, but was resentful at himself for never having considered something which on the face of it was so obvious a basic thing, fitting alike for Natchitoches and Louisiana. He assured me that whenever I wanted to undertake anything to further the Louis XIV business through the columns of the Times, as many columns for as long as I wanted them would be mine, all of which I thought very nice of him. On leaving, I received a copy of the section of the paper of this week carrying the article about the Grandpere plate, and I shall enclose it herewith. I haven't read it and so am a little hazy about what I put into it, there has been so much stuff knocked off on this keyboard during the interim.

Tonight Ed. Morrow, broadcasting from atop the CBS building, remarked upon the big moon over the metropolitan area, so I know you are having fine weather, too. The same silvery moon is over the white garden and thoughts very shortly will be traveling from there in the direction of the same metropolitan area, carrying plenty of telepathic messages to little Miss Lee who has made my day so happy.....

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Joie Sterling
9/26

Wednesday, October 1st, 1952.

Memorandum:

Mr. Hamilton seems to be getting no end of mileage to his credit these days.

In a letter from La Storm, which as yet I have not been able to decipher, is this likeness of the first Secretary of the Treasury, and I can think of nothing that would be better than to have it invested in an evening's outing for little Miss Lee.

I expect I shall be able to get the term letter de-coded on the morrow, and it will follow along in my next. I didn't want to wait to send Aaron Burr's victim along with it, however, as I felt the sooner it reached little Miss Lee, the sooner she might find some occasion to make use of it.

Aside from listening to Clare Booth "Tokio Rose" Luce on the radio last night, I devoted the balance of my waking hours to the Mark Van Doren biography of Benjamin Franklin's sister. Perhaps the reader tends to make the book a little on the dull side, perhaps the text is a little dull,--and yet what is really the situation, the listener is probably a bit on the dull side. Of this, I must say for the book, it has a great deal of material about which I knew nothing, and the detailed account it gives of the poverty of the Franklin family, its shiftlessness, its tuberculosis afflictions and its insanity forms a drab pattern for a background which, somehow, although not in this volume in particular, Benjamin Franklin appears in even more brilliant colors. Everything about the correspondence between him and his sister indicates how kind he was to his family and how generous he was in helping them, and one comes to the conclusion as one progresses with the reading,--I'm about half through, that this "first civilized American" had a heart as big as his brain, and heaven knows the latter was exceptional.

You will find the enclosed letter from Mrs. Sterling to contain several points of interest. I shall write her that I am glad she shared some of her problems with me, since "misery loves company", and from what she has to say, I take it that problems concerning a publicly owned shrine are not unlike those confronted on occasion by those devoting a degree of affection on the privately owned ones. I think I shall be able to arrange a rather large gathering to

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hear her lecture in Natchitoches, and since I shall not attend, I shall look forward to seeing her either on her way to town or on her way back to St. Francisville.

While I think of it, --and this is really at any old time between now and February, I wonder if you could locate the film of St. Augustin's Church, --the one taken from this side of the river, showing mighty little of the Church, save its steeple, but giving grand reflections of the trees in the water. I thought this view might lend itself nicely as an illustration for "Cane River Reflections".

As the copy will not be turned in before February, there is no rush about this print, and the print itself needs to be of no particular size, for one that is 3 by 4, or some such will be quite adequate. I have the 8 by 10 inch one in my Christmas book of no elrose, but I don't like to remove any of those prints, for while it undoubtedly would be returned, I don't want to take a chance, -- I love my books and their leather bindings so much, and turn through them so often, and as much, I suspect because of the feeling I have that they are Miss Lee's doings as much as for what the pictures themselves portray.

This morning's dawn was so wonderfully clear that I found added zest in marching up the road for a little work and a little pondering at Arenbourg, wanting to contemplate the i pending birthday festivities a little, --and slap on the spot. I found some two or four legged animal had brushed against the gourds and had knocked one on to the ground. I accordingly brought it back to ucca and have left it on the cistern top at the end of the front gallery where the sun has shone on it all day, and although it's premature for it to be off the vine, I'm hoping it may dry out nicely, and if so, that will be well in advance of its brothers and sisters lingering on the home base.

Late this afternoon, I dropped by to see Madam Regard for a few minutes, --the first time I had seen her since her return from Mansura. She seems about as spry as usual, but says she is inclined to get tired easily. This tiredness is noticeable in an occasional word or phrase, as when she spoke to me about a priest I had met recently. She said he was in the under current, -- a bit of news that I took without batting an eye lash, but was puzzled by the word until, through subsequent conversation, I learned he had come from Poland and had been active during the last six months of the war in underground work.

I had such a delicious musicale last night, and what with thermometer and moon being both so high tonight again, I think I shall indulge in another.....

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Thursday, October 2nd, 1952.
Memorandum: There's little or nothing of interest in this letter, save reference to the enclosures, a couple of which I think you will find interesting.

La Storm, living up to her name, is certainly a sight, paddling around in the young hurricane she described as having blessed South Carolina with a "heavy dew". With the physical courage to disdain the elements as she jogs on toward 81, she really must have been possessed of a tremendous spirit when in her prime. But perhaps for some people the prime of life doesn't taper off as it does for the majority. I think the Madam, for example, held to her full vigor until she was nearly 70. In fact there never was any tapering off, -- simply one day she was possessed of all her strength and enthusiasm, and the next day she wasn't, and it never came back.

Perhaps la Storm will be like that, for the way she is flying about the country would seem to indicate that she suffers not at all from any diminution of her faculties.

It is kind of her to invite me to South Carolina. Naturally I shall not accept, but invitations are pleasant whether accepted or rejected, and I shall of course respond to the matter in such a way as to suggest that acceptance is to be anticipated, -- a little later, which in the end, will turn out to be much later.

Mrs. Brandon's letter is as nice as ever. Do you reckon she herself typed it. If so, she surely must be improving. I reckon you may remember her typing from the days prior to her last affliction and can therefore more readily determine if she actually per ormed on her machine, --or if Susie took the letter down for her.

I ran through some of the clippings which came in both envelopes from Dora and la Storm. It would seem that Archibald Rutledge is definitely on the Eisenhower band wagon, which in a way isn't surprising, since most planters are.

As for Dora's clipping about the restoration of Versailles, I was of course much interested. I gather the writer of the article may

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not have known much about the actual needs of the Chateau, since the roof seemed to be the main thing mentioned. If memory serves me correctly, a new roof was put on the big chateau in the 1930's. That was carried on through the gift of John D. Rockefeller who restored the little farm of Marie Antoinette at the same time. I remember so well the great steel girder that went sleep through Mme. de Pompadour's private salon on the floor above the state apartments of the big chateau, --an item that was introduced, so I was told, to give proper support to the new roof then being completed. I hope the thing didn't wear out in ten years, --the roof, I mean, but if it did, perhaps the girder will have worn out, too, and some method may be found to eliminate it entirely, -- I hope.

One of the Reverend Fathers from across the river called on me this morning. The purpose of his visit was to inquire if the Grandpere plates would be here in time for the bazaar on Saturday. I allowed as how I thought Grandpere would be in all readiness. I even went a step farther, rolling six dozen of them slap into his lap, after which I presented him with a package which was merely another Grandpere, properly wrapped with the wall bracket attached, asking him to accept the thing as a gift for the Rectory which seemed to delight him. As there will be no re-order on the Grandpere plate, I suppose that design, more than any of the others, will become a real collector's item. How odd if this sheet of paper, surviving a hundred years, should come to the attention of a collector of Cane River lore, and the latter make a pilgrimage to St. Augustin's rectory to find the last surviving example of Grandpere's "flying saucer".

If you have had an opportunity to hear Ed Morrow these last two nights, you will have been as impressed as was I that so much time has been taken up by a gentleman named Richie or some such, doing a re-hash of the day's base ball game. All the white folks living in this area whom I know are well acquainted with the names and biographies of all the players on both teams which undoubtedly would enable them to comprehend what Mr. Richie is talking about, the identity of the participants mentioned, and so on. But the killing thing about the thing is that the sports enthusiasts I know in this area are not at all interested in news casts of Ed. Morrow, --or anybody else, I guess, since baseball seems the one and all consuming event of the day appealing to them, with the result that you and I who are perhaps on the dumb side about the finer points of baseball get the whole thing unreeled on the Morrow program, and those who could understand the lingo of the game never tune in on Mr. Morrow. Viewed from either angle, Mr. Richie's efforts seem to be love's labor lost".....

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Friday, October 3rd, 1952.

Memorandum: How nice to find your Wednesday air mail in today's post. There was a flock of other things, some of which I read by hit or miss method, reserving your letter for a confidential secretary, both on account of the confidential nature of the reader and also because it is pleasant to hear him end up with "Love, Three".

But "the best made plans of mice and men" went astray, for just as we were mid point in your letter, much hooping and racket gave fair warning that the Wenks were approaching Yucca in force, and so, half read, your epistle went into the armoir where it will remain undisturbed until the morrow, thus guaranteeing me a pleasant chat with you regardless as to how much other hurly-burly develops.

My morning wasn't so bad, what with the weather, even as yours in the country, as mentioned in your letter, was perfect. But I should have knocked wood when recently I reported the absence of any crush of pilgrims, for my entire afternoon was cramped full of them, one batch treading hard on the heels of the ones just ahead, so that by the time first dark arrived and the secretary with it, I was ready to call it a day, somehow not anticipating the sudden on-slaught of Wenks, which just about put the finishing touch on the enervation section. I think Sister was not drunk but merely in one of her completely wacky mental states. She had all her big guns trained across the fence, denouncing the ladies in that direction with such brick-bats as "That God damned old son of a bith, Madam Regard, she's rotten to the core" and so on and so forth, and the whole thing relative to nothing obvious to the naked eye. And as though to intensify these pyrotechnics, her youngest brother, the ex-groom, sat at table, talking with some affability to the clerk and speaking not to much as a "Good evening" to Ben and me. It was all very civilized, the whole business, as you can readily picture, impelling one to ponder on what is more wearing than having to live with lunatics.

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So far as Sister's reaction to me was, I must say it was as revolting at the opposite end of the emotional scale as her insane attacks on poor Madam Regard, for I was loaded down with a huge angel (of all things) food cake, and no end of other edibles, - fancy cheese, bottled something or other and canned heaven knows what. I'm a fool when it comes to gifts from such a source and as soon as quiet had returned to this bend of the river by the Wenk withdrawal, I made the most of the full moon and be-took myself across the cotton fields to set to it all the food when to some of my negro friends who could use it to advantage and who didn't have to know about the taint put on it so far as I was concerned by the association with the dinner.

But enough of all this unpleasantness. The pilgrims today were pleasant if too plentiful, -- Texas, South Carolina and South Dakota being represented. And Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wood drove down from Natchitoches to invite me to have dinner with them in town any date I would name. Naturally I didn't name any, and shall devote myself to thinking up reasons between now and the middle of the week as to why we shall have to put off the dinner until after the holidays. The Woods are so kind but so incapable of comprehending that I really prefer to close my door on the world after sun down to commune a little with that lady of Lyme, do a little reading and writing, followed by an early folding up of the beard.

Before this late date, I should have called for your opinion concerning the enclosed picture of the African House. What with the intensity of the light and shade, plus the general composition, it is the best picture I have ever seen of the African House. Isn't it a pity the cancellation marks appear in the most noticeable part of the photo. It was taken by a expert photographer associated with the Veterans Administration, and although I have several times attempted contact with him for re-prints, I have been unsuccessful, as the gentleman, I am told, has suffered a relapse and nobody knows where the film of this picture may be found. I had the man make a large one, perhaps 12 by 16, and placed under a mat, which I had in mind presenting to Miss Lee at some appropriate time, and that I have secured in my armchair, but as between the time that likeness was achieved and the effort to secure a perfect copy in this post card size, the poor man went under. I think we might keep this post card for subsequent reference, and should it be convenient for you to keep on file, that will be alright, or, if you prefer to have me keep it in my folio, that will be alright, too. But I send this along regardless, thinking the size of it would make no difference, just so long as you know a larger, more perfect print awaits your ownership whenever circumstances are more convenient for you to accept. I'll hold now.....

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Sunday, October 5th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Save for a Saturday night hurly burly at supper, the week end has been perfect in weather, people and peace.

The Wenks blew in while we were at supper. Sister was apparently quite off. Mattie the cook had been to Cloutierville in the afternoon where they both had probably had a few snorts. Sister said she was vastly distressed because she had just learned of "from somebody in Cloutierville" that I had so up-set J. H. on Monday and Tuesday, perssuading him to fire the cook, that J. H. hadn't been able to eat any food for two days. Imagine.

But fortunately Saturday nights don't last forever, and peace returned after the tribe headed out for Shreveport.

The clerk, with wife and child, and Frances Henry came down for dinner today, and with Ben and me, dined across the fence, to celebrate the dual birthday of Madam Regard and J. H.

Madam Regard was so happy to show us the cards she had received and declared the one from you was the loveliest both because of the beauty of the card and the one who sent it. You would have been touched by the pleasure your message gave her. Need I add that I concurred.

I was mildly surprised at what the ladies had to report on their return from Church. They said that after the priest had concluded saying High Mass, he admonished his parishoners when attending the bazaar tonight to give especially thought to the St. Augustin plates, urging them to buy them not only for their own homes but for their children and for their relatives no longer living on Cane River. Advertisements of this nature from the pulpit strike a new note so far as my limited experience is concerned but in the present instance, I must say I am not opposed to publicity from the pulpit.

Late this afternoon, I made a round of the persimmon trees to find the dry weather had just about finished them off, save in a few isolated places where the shade of other trees had afforded extra protection from the prolonged heat. I put

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a couple in a familiar tin box and will send them along with the same mail that takes this letter. You can readily throw away the outer wrapping, for I put the box in a paper sack, so it could be easily managed, after the wrapping had been tossed into the trash basket.

I tucked in the cone of a grandiflor magnolia from Arenbourg, too. I fear all the lovely little red seeds will probably shell off in transit, but you will perhaps find a few of them in the bottom of the box. It has always seemed to me they exude a slight perfume if held for a moment or two in the closed palm, but that may be sheer imagination.

Just as I was starting for dinner on Saturday, I met none other than Irma Sompberyac Willard on the gallery. She had been in Natchitoches to spend Friday night with her sister and was on her way back to Baton Rouge. She brought me a little booklet which I shall try to attach to the persimmon package. She said she had received inquiries from Paris regarding the A B C section that is in the back of the book, -- I believe the last three pages, as it seems several educators want to make use of the material. But as I have no one to turn through it for me at the moment, I seem much in the dark as to its value or even its nature. Don't bother to save it, as I shall not find any opportunity to turn through it.

It seems that in Natchitoches she had heard about the Cane River Country plate and had hoped she could get a few for Christmas presents for various people in different sections of the country. I could let her have a dozen which seemed to please her no end. She is returning to Natchitoches on the week end of November 2nd and hopes she may get some more, but I doubt if there will be any at that time, for the 24 dozen originally ordered have about played out, and if I were to re-order a few, they would scarcely be here before the 1st of December.

Naturally through my mind, running at cross currents, is or are Robina's admonition about going slow and what may happen as a result of the Times Picayune article a week from today. Perhaps nothing will happen as a result of the article, and if so, I shall at least not find myself shame-faced, for what with the items reaching the vanishing point, a sudden spurt of interest would just about sweep the holding shelf clean.

And so the week end turns and Brooklyn won again, and since the weather permitted ball playing, I take it you may have been able to get a bit of ozone in the Botanical Gardens or some such, I hope.....

5706

Monday, October 6th, 1952.

Memorandum:

What with yesterday's high in the 90's and today's in the 50's, it really seems quite bitter.

Just after I had finished Sunday's Memo, one of the Reverend Fathers tapped at my door. The bazaar was still going full tilt and I take it the Grandpere plates were rolling, for the priest asked if they might have one hundred more. I had only three dozen, but was glad to turn them over to the "gentleman of the cloth".

I had rather expected somebody or other from the Rectory would get over this way today, but I reckon they must be too busy counting their in-take to venture out of doors, what with the chill weather obtaining at the moment.

I saw Bill Jones at the Post Office. He said he had bought one plate and later, giving the matter a little more thought, he had gone back to get another or two but found that segment of the bazaar "washed up", so he a sumed that particular booth had been swept clean. If it has, so much the better, if not, I shall be glad to take over whatever is left, for 8 or 10 people have asked me for one or more, and it is possible the Picayune flurry may call forth a demand for a few. Then, too, the festivities of the centenary, planned for Spring, will undoubtedly call for further merchandise of this special bracket, so there's no danger of having any excessive hold over of this brand of merchandise. The old adage "All's well that ends well" is, I think, the Grandpere episode may be rapped up as having approached satisfaction all around.

I was glad to see Mrs. Howard this afternoon. She brought a friend, Lucille Simmons, with her. Both ladies are quite civilized, and Mrs. Simmons spoke of her sons, who must be in the 16 or 17 year bracket, and apparently are possessed of the same keen interest in what goes on in the world as their mother. Mrs. Howard turned out to be rather different in appearance and personality from what I recalled. I believe her first visit came on the heels of a couple of tours just concluded when she arrived for her initial visit, and I suppose it was I, not she, who was a bit on the enervated side. Today she reminded me a little of the lady doctor, but I must say she doesn't parallel

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5707

Monday, October 6th, 1952

Madam Worsley, since, I gather, Mrs. Howard is a devotee of Mary Baker Eddy. It was Mrs. Simmons who brought that fact to the surface, since, like so many Eddy-ites, Mrs. Howard seemed a little diffident about speaking of it, and like so many others of her faith, seemed vaguely surprised when I didn't denounce her for her belief. She seemed to find it almost unbelievable that I should have "Science and Health" on records but when I told her they were read by the same Reader Brown who broadcasts the Boston Saturday services, she seemed convinced but still puzzled that anyone would enjoy reading the Eddy Bible if they weren't communicants. She fairly beamed when she heard me say I felt that one of the most remarkable women New England ever produced was Mary Baker Eddy, while Mrs. Simmons, obviously not in the Eddy camp, inclined to frown a little. Then I went on to opine that if, indeed, Mrs. Eddy was one of the greatest successes of her sex brought forth in New England, I must hasten to add that I thought a close second was Lydia Pinkham, manufacturer of "pink pills for pale people", -- at which Mrs. Simmons cried out with merriment and poor Mrs. Howard seemed more puzzled than before the first clouds of doubt had given way to a beam of hope and satisfaction.

Quite aside from its historic attributes, the true value of Melrose (when the lunatics are absent) is the opportunity it affords the pilgrim to pause momentarily and so catch his spiritual and intellectual breath. I have long felt that in the field of Psychiatry as in the realm of Journalism, the same catch-phrase might truly be applied: "Give people the light and they will find their own way". Sometimes at Melrose the average individual, withdrawing momentarily from the hurly-burly of the swirl of every day life, can momentarily perceive a truer perspective of life and his relation to the rest of the universe, --and one such glimpse on his own part is worth a billion dictums from storied tomes and pedant strictures. The 600 mile trip from Dallas to Melrose and back, just to spend a couple of hours out of the surge of the main stream of daily doings, seems like an investment of time and energy of questionable value, but as they departed both ladies declared their visit to have provided them with more than they could set forth in words, and since they were the ones to expend the energy and were pleased with the results then far be it from me to question their investment policy.

I fear this is a mighty dull memo, but perhaps tomorrow will be better.....

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5708 Carolyn Ramsey

Tuesday, October 7th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The Weather Bureau says its cold, and I'm inclined to believe them.

The post wasn't much today, but I did find the enclosed letter from Carolyn interesting.

Although I shall not tell her so, I don't mind confiding to you that perhaps the chief value of her contact with Mr. Pratt, which, I must say, she established with remarkable speed after I had written her on that score, --the chief value comes from the fact that through Carolyn I may be able to get a couple of magazines to do something about the Audubon-Oakley business, which seems to me important. It's odd how something like the Audubon-Oakley matter should get a little attention in small newspapers and somehow escape the big publications. I'm inclined to think that many an Editor may not have heard much about Audubon to begin with, and in the second place, I'm convinced nobody has approached any of the big publications with the proper slant on the subject. With Carolyn's camera to record some of the doings down yonder, the story can be presented not as a bird sanctuary, but what the nation can do by way of creating a lovely park and saving an historic shrine by various means, including the use of convict labor which especially in the deep South has too long been concentrated on piddling on second class road work or frittering away energies on cane fields to no particular point or purpose.

Through the connection with Mrs. Sterling, --and I shall stir that bit of ember from time to time, I think a story may be forthcoming that will be to everybody's advantage, while at the same time through Lois Ester and Madam Sterling and those people at The Cottage, two or three other stories may be plucked easily enough in the same neighborhood with a minimum of effort.

I have been giving some thought to the St. Francisville area of late on other grounds, and if things work out to everybody's advantage in the spring, I might have Mr. Lemoyne of the Historical Society call a meeting at Audubon at which gathering I shall harangue the Society and at the same time take the opportunity to present the

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Society and perhaps Audubon-Oakley with a couple chips of porcelain on historical matters, which should be nice for everybody and at the same time take the opportunity to survey the neighborhood at a quick glance, introduce Carolyn to the plantation people and the graveyard, and so return here at the close of a busy day, leaving Carolyn to snap the pictures for stories that might be acceptable to several publications. All this is purely nebular on my part at the moment, but I shall start a few wheels turning gradually, so that the whole project will be in good running order, should there be occasion to jump aboard in the Spring, at which time, if Carolyn is lost in some other direction there will still be ample reason for me to carry through some sort of a program, and if, by some miracle, Carolyn should keep her appointments, then that would be just so much gravy.

Her reference to the "Flying Saucer" story may be well understood by little Miss Lee, if it hasn't been discussed by memo as yet. I don't recall if I did or did not mention that I tucked a paragraph into my last letter to Carolyn, remarking that if the Picayune story goes over neatly, we might use it as the basis for a slightly more extended subject for magazine purposes. Apparently the idea struck her as being not impossible. My thought was that if the Picayune found the subject matter had sufficient general interest to publish, the same might be the case in other magazines, --illustrated ones, so that in cooking up the thing, we would have occasion to reproduce the plates to demonstrate what the tale was all about, --and, of course, it is the publicity for the plates that is the point of the whole business.

How the Editors of any of the pictorial magazines handle the story is a matter of no interest to our side, but simply that they give ample space to the porcelain creations, don't you think? I have very kindly urged me to attend a little sandwich and champagne party she is giving, I suppose, right now, but was considerate in not pressing for my presence. I don't know the people too well, --including the Reverend Fathers, I suppose, and some of the Magnolia widows, and naturally I should much prefer being slap here, for it is nice and cozy, butaine and all, and there are a few letters to write and a chapter or two about The Savannah I prefer exploring to staggering around in chit-chat with nice people but those who mean nothing to me so far as giving over an evening which would be pleasant enough but not nearly so much fun as being by one's own fireside.

And so Brooklyn which I hoped would win, did not, but actually like the champagne and sandwiches, I'm not distressed either way.....

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5710 clipping re Trina
Sampleyae Willard

Wednesday, October 8th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your fat envelope in this morning's post.

Although I had written you not to bother to make the transcript, I must confess to you that actually, when I decided to do just the mulatto section of the river, I still yearned for the letter, for although I had originally planned to use it in the Bermuda section of the article, I thought it would be so nice to insert it in the Melrose section, quoting from it to show what type of literature having to do with section of the river appealed most to the Madam. Thanks to your industry, this is now possible, --if I can just find somebody to read it in its entirety to me, and I am doubly happy about your promptness, because this effort on your part, arriving before my cancelling letter, now will make the article mean so much more to both of us since we shall both have labored on it together.

And thanks so much for being so characteristically thoughtful as to give me the page number in Old Louisiana wherein Lyle sets forth some particulars about the matter, and also for the particulars as revealed by the obituary. You are so inexhaustible in thinking such kindnesses slap through to the end, and it means so much to me.

I know just what you were talking about when you said the thermometer was at 40 and that meant scuffling around in the moth ball department. It was 40 this morning here, too, and I rustled around to find a mighty pretty sweater that had come to me from little Miss Lee, and which was just the checker in my out of door activities until the sun got well over the horizon and made me shed it until late this evening when I was standing around running water on plants that looked cold enough without having dampness added to their status, but the ground is so dry they will be glad of the moisture on the morrow, when we are promised warmer weather as a respite.

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There was quite a wail from Mrs. Holloman in this morning's post, but as the letter contained some data she asked me to transcribe for my own file, I simply sent back the whole letter. She took me to task on two points, --first because I had released the plates and second because she had learned from Mrs. Rand that I had sent Mrs. White a print of the pot.

As for the first matter, --release of the plates, I had written her several months ago on this point, explaining at the time that the reason I was anxious in getting the publication date of the Picayune thing, in which she had inserted the line that the plates had not been released, that if the Picayune didn't hurry up and publish the article, it would be out-dated, since I was planning a release both in town and for the St. Augustin fair. I reckon she never got my letter, or perhaps it came at some time or other when she was distracted, and yet, as I recall, she later mentioned something about altering the sentence in the article so that it would read that after original creation of the first plate, it had not been considered as an item for general sales, but, in case the demand for the item increased, such a change in status would be effected. Be that as it may, she didn't seem to remember all this and screamed. As for the pot business, I don't see that that matter is any concern of hers. After all, we paid for the prints and the films, and that ought to make it ours, I should think. But of course what really got into her hair was the fact that Mrs. Rand probably took delight in sticking a pin into her, since Mrs. White refused to receive the Hollomans, her husband's law partner, following the latter divorce and remarriage, and Madam Rand always gets a certain sadistic pleasure in taking a swing at la Holloman. I don't recall if I ever mentioned whence came the pot, --and that was nobody's business to begin with, but if I thought of it at all when Mrs. Holloman was here, I probably avoided any mention whatsoever, since I realized the name of Mrs. White, as dommer, would excite no vast happiness on the Holloman side. This is of no consequence, the whole thing, but I mention it as an example of the curious twists that some people can try to contrive to make themselves momentarily distressed.

I'm so glad you like the idea of the Quatorze statue for some place in Louisiana, and especially Natchitoches. I haven't heard from the Ambassador as yet, but will of course keep you advised.

I haven't heard from the Reverend Fathers from across the river as yet. Celeste told me this morning they were at her party last night but had been too busy to check on the affairs of the bazaar as yet. And of course I can readily understand that, in view of the social demands imposed upon the clergy. ...

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*French
Counsel General*

10/9

Thursday, October 9th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Sunday letter, so pleasantly ample, in today's post.

How glad I am to know that you sent along the transcript of Aunt Benjamin's letter before you found my cancellation in the post, hard on the request of my initial request. For now that I am to concentrate on the Melrose segment of the river, I shall find it much to my satisfaction to be able to quote from this letter, as a prize example of the type of Cane River literature that Miss Cammie liked best. Again my blessings on your brow for your nobility in providing me with this, and if the article is any good at all, I shall like it better because you have contributed so heavily.

I got some of my mail disposed of by those that passing pilgrim, but, of course, saved your letter for the confidential secretaries, one of who came just before supper. I read a portion of your letter at that sitting, thinking the other would be here on my return from the big house and would dash through the balance, slap to the "Love, Three" department, but he must have got lost on the way, and thus I am guaranteed the pleasure of a further chat with you on the morrow.

And may I thank you for passing along so many interesting details about what is going on relative to the restoration undertakings at Versailles. I am so glad to have these details, and am wondering if this shouldn't provide illustration with a marvelous vehicle to bring out some publicity on the matter. But then, on second thought, illustration never did seem to warm to Versailles, --a fact which always puzzled me, since it always struck me that Versailles was just made for illustration articles, but little or nothing was ever done about it.

I got a laugh out of your reference to Ora's current efforts

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to surmount pronunciations correctly of the German "r", and your own instinctive reactions to the American "r's" in such words as Rural. Should you ever feel impelled to drop her a few lines in German, her address is

Mrs. R. B. Williams,
1054 Williams Avenue,
Natchitoches, La.

I think you have that address, and I do not recommend that you put yourself to any trouble in the matter, for I reckon that Ora, like you, has plenty to take up her time, but I pass along the address in case by chance you should ever stumble over a line in German you wanted to pass along, and it goes without saying that you are quite free to mention the names of some of your friends living down this way.

You will be as pleased as I when I tell you that my letter to the Ambassador apparently registered favorably. As I mailed it on the 29th or 30th, sending it by ordinary post to Washington, I take it that it did not linger long with the Reverend Bonnet, --and thanks a billion for giving me the particulars you included in your Sunday letter concerning that gentleman.

In today's post came a letter from the Consul General in New Orleans, suggesting a conference. I interpret this to mean that the matter is being given serious consideration.

I telephoned Charles Cunningham to acquaint him with the reaction. He told me there wasn't any question about the Mayor and Town Fathers recognizing the great value the town would enjoy if this business is successfully terminated, and that I could rest assured of adequate backing on the part of the town. I took the opportunity to suggest that before releasing any publicity on the pending matter, I thought it would be well for us (interruption) --I thought it a good idea to determine a site for the statue in advance, so that that point need not be a subject for controversy, since if such minor details are settled before the matter is introduced to public consideration, it will save a lot of unnecessary discussion, leaving the main object as the sole matter for discussion, --and approval, without any hair-pulling in advance.

He agreed and I accordingly wrote New Orleans a letter, the carbon of which is attached. Of course, contrary to the last paragraph, I'm not dreaming of going to New Orleans, but this letter will serve to settle a couple of points in advance on the part of the Government, after which we can open up the cannonade...

5714

5714

Friday, October 10th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Monday "post script" in today's post.

I hear the same story every year, --"they will be finished picking cotton next week", --and that usually starts along about the first of October and runs through until about Christmas. But what with my no account secretariat, I never so wished an exception might turn up this year in making the statement true, so that I can get things a little better rigged up for the incoming post department. As it is, I read your "post script" first, and then a hurly-burly developed, so that I had to put off the balance of yesterday's unfinished letter until the morrow. But I tell myself that guarantees me a gleam of sunshine for the week end, and thus try balancing up my impatience with anticipation.

I'm so glad you enjoyed the several items coming your way and I hope the Hamiltio item may be employed for something that will provide a moment of sheer relaxation.

In writing Madam Marco, I referred to the typed letter, not asking if she did it, thinking a yes or no response might tend to depress her a little, if the negative answer would be forthcoming, but I did say that I was entranced and jealous of her, since the letter proved that either she was up and at her keyboard with her pen hammer or that perhaps better still, she had had better luck than I and had been successful in rounding up a dependable secretary.

As for Madam Storm, where in the world do you reckon she may be at the present time. In a earlier note, I though she mentioned something about Nova Scotia, but Williamsburg and Manhattan may be merely stops along the route. Perhaps in reality she never mentioned Nova Scotia, and I must say this seems to be a somewhat doubtful season to explore that somewhat forlorn region. People do go there in the summer time, --the lady who came on Monday with Mrs. Howard had been there this last summer, but I can't see much urge to go there at any season, and especially at a time when Jack Frost must have just about flattened out the flora without which that region would offer nothing so much to me as an impression of a glance at the end of the world.

5715

5715

cannot sell people what is really a splendid bill of goods....

I finally finished The Savannah, and found it an interesting compilation of biographies of unusual characters, some well analyzed political manifestations and as comprehensive, short but pertinent accounts, of racial problems, likely to be run across in books of more concentrated subject matter. As has been remarked before, there are so many fascinating historical personalities that one wonders why the movies have to cast about so frequently for outlandish and wholly fictional material. For instance, there is the account of Henry Schultz who started out with nothing, built the town of Hamburg, South Carolina, on the opposite bank of the Savannah from Augusta, Georgia, his flyers into high finance, his crashes, his returns to affluence, his somewhat ridiculous tangle with the law, his ruin and finally his refusal to die when everything else in life had been tried and found not too satisfying. Frankly, I never heard of Henry Schultz before but I'm glad I caught up with him at long last, for somehow he typifies the "boon and bust" pattern that so frequently is a part of the American saga. And then there was an endless tale about a half breed squaw, I guess during the late colonial period, who went through most extraordinary experiences, and eventually through all manner of fraudulent claims, succeeded in rounding up a fine estate and lived out her last years as an opulent plantation mistress. She was obviously a bag of the first water and one who must have driven an entire colony of Georgians completely nuts with her outrageous doings, and yet, quite aside from her will power and determination, she exemplifies a spirit of perseverance that completely backed the more virile sex of the white population slap out of countenance. I have read and heard lots of stories about the poor red skin and 99 per cent of these tales end up in tragedy, but here is a true one that didn't end in tragedy and what's more, the lady, outrageous as she was, apparently knew what she wanted, how to get it and succeeded in face of half a dozen hobbles that would have downed men of greater strength before they got started. Perhaps in years to come, such biographies will be portrayed in films, and luck the student who can become acquainted with such biographies by merely sitting in on a single film.

I am about to read a little from "Master Plan, U. S. A." by John Fisher, or some such. I sampled a page or two and it sounds informative as a picture of matters revolving around the State Department and the White House, as of 1951. The President is depicted as often right in his decisions to accept recommendations of the State Department, but without ability to inspire the people with confidence, or to acquaint them with trends before they start exploding. The Secretary of State, on the other hand, is presented as about the best the country has had in decades, but of a nature that is so intellectual, capable and correct, that it

5716

Richard Pratt

D. D.

9/23

Sunday, October 12th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A lovely week end at this bend of the river, and may the same thing be said for the lower reaches of the Hudson.

As was to be expected, the pilgrimage traffic was a bit on the heavy side, but as the majority of the visitors were either old friends or potentially new ones, there is none of that end-of-the-day enervation that usually goes along with the presence of dull travelers.

On Saturday J. H. forgot to tell me that President Fletcher of Southwestern had telephoned from Lafayette, asking if he might bring some friends to see me and Melrose early Sunday morning. But that didn't matter, for when they arrived, I had already done a day's work and was going full tilt on my weekly letters to Charles, Adam Marco and so on.

Mrs. Fletcher brought me, --of all things, --a lemon pie she herself had stirred up last night, and her husband presented me with a huge gob of cheese, manufactured by some department of the university, from milk produced on the University farm. I haven't sampled either as yet, but shall do so before folding up my beard, and tomorrow half a dozen families on the plantation will be gnawing on hunks of the product which, in its present state, probably weighs about ten pounds.

They told me about an article in today's Picayune, with text and illustrations by an Ethel Holloman, and said the whole thing was very good, especially the clarity of the illustrations.

Early in the afternoon a group of New Orleans people, including one gentleman on the Picayune, passed this way. The Picayune gentleman mentioned the article and said a double spread of pictures, taken in and about Yucca, had been included in the original lay out but apparently at the last moment, everything had been eliminated except the pictures of the plates. I suppose this sudden elimination may be attributed to the subtle hand of some New Orleans historian or perhaps as a result of the "Holloman mad" about the picture of the pot going to Mrs. White. The Picayune man said he thought he could find out what impelled the sudden switch, and if he did discover it, he

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5717

would let me know.

As for myself, I haven't read the article as yet but if the Fletchers liked it, I reckon lots of other people will. And as for the ~~xxxx~~ omission of the Yucca photographs, that is all to the good, so far as our business is concerned, for what is most desirable is emphasis on the plates, and, from what I can make out of the thing, the subject matter of the plates is the thing on which attention is focused. I haven't had an opportunity to explore any of the written material, but if, as Dr. and Mrs. Fletcher reported, the text and illustrations are attributed to one Ethel Holloman, then that statement would seem to confirm the report of the Picayune gentleman regarding the page of Yucca photographs, since none, actually, of the illustrations employed in the article, as it finally appears, is by the Holloman camera.

Along about first dark, I was surprised but delighted to have Ed and, his wife and Ellen Lockett, together with half a dozen of their friends, appear on my gallery. We had a pleasant sitting for an hour or so, and as they left, the African House looked wonderful, what with night having come on during the sitting, and all lights in the building giving its appearance in darkness something that was as remarkable as its architectural lines in day light. They said Mrs. White continues to hover on the brink and that Dr. Hand seems to be flitting with over-work, what with his efforts as local chairman of the "Democrats of Eisenhower" organization.

Twice my secretaries put in an appearance during the day, but each time we were interrupted before we really got started. I did run hurriedly through the Daisey in the Bell letter which sounds as sweet and tired as usual.

I find a letter from Mr. Pratt which came some time back and got lost in the shuffle, but I think it contains nothing of much interest, but I send it along regardless so you may keep abreast of that quarter.

My radio played out on Friday night, just as the conclusion of the Stenson speech in New Orleans, with its post script in French. Perhaps it was the post script that knocked out the machine, but I thought the whole text of the speech excellent. I hope to have the radio back in working order again soon for France-American relations seem to be deteriorating at the moment, which ought to be just the time to make a flamboyant gesture with a statue most timely.....

5718

[encl.]

card from Roane
10/10

Monday, October 13th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your grand letter of Wednesday in today's post.

I can only marvel at your ingenuity and artistry in having eradicated the marks from the post card with such adroitness and dispatch. That is just another example of the keen mind you possess and which I lack, for never in this world would I have supposed such a thing could have been accomplished, and therefore never would have tried an eraser. I think you are smart. Somehow, the episode reminds me of my lack of imagination in another direction, --food, --for many a time I have gone into a delicatessen, dying of hunger and unable to imagine potatoe salade as being available until my eye would chance to run on the stuff, and I love it. Perhaps I had been equally hungry days on end for just some such sort of stuff, but anything as simple as salade never came to the surface of my brain.

It is certainly more than thoughtful and generous of you to have rushed over to Mr. Kodak's emporium on my behalf. I am sure the likenesses will be splendid and I know Charles Cunningham will be enchanted to have this picture in his anniversary number.

I may add that when I showed him this card on my last visit to town, he expressed vast admiration over it, but regretted, as did I, that the cancellation marks had ruined the picture. You see you really are to be commended for your handling of this matter so skillfully.

I am so glad you told me of the Allister Cook program which I do not know about. I shall go fishing for it as soon as my radio is functioning again. I never heard the man but during the week, --the last week, --of the Democratic Convention at Chicago, and I thought him wonderful. I may have mentioned it at the time, --I don't recall, but if so, you know how glad I must be in learning that he is again available over the ether waves.

And thanks much for telling me of the Lehman and Eleanor Roosevelt speeches. I am so glad you passed along this information. Truly, as you say, she is great.

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Of course I had heard nothing of the D. A. R. and their guest speaker. For once those gals really got just the right person to address them. Now next year they can negotiate with Senator McCarthy, and then everything will be wonderful. Never were two gentlemen so perfectly cast for such a role for such a gathering.

It goes without saying that I was shocked when I received the attached clipping. Oddly enough it came from Mrs. Howard who when here last Monday, had heard me mention Mrs. Baldwin's name, casually enough, --something about the identity of the person who had taken a picture of some building or other at Melrose. In today's post came a little note from her, saying she wondered if this could be the lady I had mentioned.

I shall write a letter, addressed to Lucille, --Mrs. Holt Massey, --and send it to Helen's address, with Helen's name on the envelope, too, so perhaps we shall have a report from that quarter before long. The clipping tells a much, --and yet so little as to Helen's condition, as I suppose the news report went over the wires before details were known on that point, --immediate condition. Probably Carolyn knows about it, but I don't know if she does or not., what with her efforts at winding up the State Department this week. I reckon, however, she might have telephoned me, had she heard about the accident. I shall not write Carolyn, as I assume she will be in New York, or Philadelphia before heading home, and I suppose such undertakings have already gotten under way.

A Shreveport banker and his wife who had read the article in yesterday's Picayune passed this way today to round up a couple of plates. Three ladies from Oklahoma who had never heard of Melrose, but had seen the Picayune yesterday in New Orleans, drove this way to have a look at the place this afternoon. A couple of people telephoned from town, asking where plates could be obtained in town, and three mulattoes in Shreveport wrote the Church, saying they had heard about the Grandpere plate last week, through relatives attending the bazaar, and wondered if they could get a plate for each of them. Apparently the idea of releasing the Grandpere plate through the Church wasn't a bad idea, and since everyone seems delighted with the item, --especially the descendants, I, too, am slap happy that they are taking to it.

I have quite a lot of mail to knock off to night, and I feel ever so noble in forcing myself to attend to it before I open the first of the three cartons arriving today from the Library, containing the recording of Dumas Malone's "Jefferson and the Rights of Man". Again my thanks for your nice, nice letter which makes my day at its close so happy.....

1372

5720 King Solomon

Carolyn Johnson 10/11
Lillian Trickett 10/11

Tuesday, October 14th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The marvelous but dry weather continues.

What with the radio out of commission last night, I finally got around to Mr. Jefferson in Paris, and had a grand time, although during the first two or three hours, the talk was definitely on the political rather than the social side. The chapter headed, "Jefferson at Versailles" was less on geographic than political levels, but I am hoping that tonight I may reach the chapter on little Miss Cosway, and perhaps geographic, personal and descriptive data will be in the ascendancy, --I hope, I hope. Nevertheless, the political details are illuminating, and I must say Dumas Malone is a writer I enjoy.

There was quite a batch of mail today, some of which I shall either enclose or send in a separate envelope. Miss Lillian writes as entertainingly as ever, and Caroline's letter is a real chip off old Briarwood. I am sure you will be as amused as I am at the polite way Caroline called my attention to the errors on the Grandpere plate whose design she must have seen in the Picayune or the Natchitoches Times illustration. As Caroline doesn't know much about this region I reckon she never heard of Grandpere's house across the river, although from the fact that his portrait shows him standing on his gallery, it would seem she might have guessed that it stood there. I reckon, too, that she never knew that the big house of Melrose was built in imitation of Grandpere's house, and although I'm not sure, since I ran through the letter hurriedly, but as I think back on her questions, I guess she thought I was mistaken about calling this house Yucca, or that Yucca had anything to do with Melrose. In short, she seems to be vastly confused by the design on the plate, and I shall write her a young book to set her straight on the "errors" she discovered. The only error I know on that particular item is the date, "contrived, 1952" but that seems comparatively unimportant, just so long as the historical data of the 19th century is in order.

I must say I think the Reverend Fathers are leisurely about giving me some report on the plates. I had another call today

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for one of these items, --a gentleman from Iowa, returning home from New Orleans where he had seen the article in the Picayune, and had stopped off here on the strength of the article. He wanted a Grandpere plate, but I was unable to accommodate him. If the Reverend Fathers have any left, I could bat them for not returning them before now.

In the political field, I have come to this conclusion: -- it doesn't matter, so far as the man is concerned, which candidate is elected. But it makes a heap of difference which Party gets the dominant number in Congress. If Stevenson wins, it means there may be a Congress elected which will go along part of the way, at least, with the new President.

If, on the other hand, Eisenhower is elected, it means the Republican Party will hold the preponderance of power in Congress, and with Taft dominating the Republican majority, Mr. Eisenhower's hands will be tied so far as getting any legislation of positive value out of Congress.

My guess is that Eisenhower is going to be swept into office, which means the House and Senate will ride on his coat tails.

My guess is that Messrs Truman and Nixon are helping and harming their respective parties in about the same proportion. Those people who pause long enough to think are undoubtedly of the opinion that Stevenson is offering more food for thought than Eisenhower, but I doubt if it is the intellect that will carry much weight as of November 4th.

I heard Senator Capehart the other night. He reminded me so much of Senator Taft, in that every sentence was clogged with false premises and absurd conclusions, but the killing thing about it was the fact that Capehart himself succeeded in giving the impression that he honestly believed what he was saying. Both men are either charlatans or fools, and for the life of me, I can't make up my mind which of the two I think they are, and the prospect of a charlatan or a fool dominating the next Congress, if it goes Republican, isn't pleasant.

The S. G. Henrys spent the day in Alexandria where the General spoke, or, perhaps, may be speaking tonight. Celeste drove down this morning to pick up her sister-in-law and take her to lunch with Madam Rand at the Bentley Hotel, and the S. G.'s plans take them back to Baton Rouge following the speech. I suppose the address is industrial. Surely it can't be political, unless every thing is political at the moment. I have made up my mind that there is nothing more ridiculous and paradoxical than "Democrats for Eisenhower", unless the Church should trot out a slogan: "Bishops for Be-devilment". Neither statement seems to jibe with realities, and the charade currently going on seems too silly for anybody but hard headed business men to indulge in, and can

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5722

Mark Robinson
10/14

Louis XIV statue - location

Wednesday, October 15th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The marvelous weather continues.....

I found an opportunity to slide into town this morning and made the most of it. First I dropped by to see Charles Cunningham. He said he had taken up the matter of possibly placing the Louis XIV statue on the grounds of the Catholic Rectory, explaining to the high priest of Natchitoches that no decision as to the eventual location might be but merely asking that proper approval be secured from Rome in case that site should finally be selected. Celeste had told me a while back that the head of the town clergy was never "feeling well", which she explained in parenthesis meant that he never would be stir himself on any matter, small of large. I therefore understood better when Charles said that to his surprise, the reverend father seemed swept away by the idea, and immediately grabbed up some stationary and dashed off a note asking for approval, through the Bishop, to the Holy Papa abroad.

Charles also told me that in subsequent talks with the Mayor, he was not at all surprised to discover that that official was in the 7th heaven of delight over the prospect, and asked me to dictate a letter, to be transcribed on municipal stationary, and signed by the Mayor, asking the Consul General to communicate with him as to the plans being formulated for the sesqui-centennial celebration, so that the festivities might be spread over as wide an area as the original states comprising the Louisiana Purchase as possible, with the Natchitoches celebration planning to culminate the central Louisiana activities in the unveiling of the statue. I ground out the letter and headed down the street when I bumped into R. B. Williams who identified himself, talked a little national politics, --he is a vast admirer of Eisenhower, saying he would sweep Louisiana, etc., etc., and thence after parting, I bumped into the photographer who took the air plane pictures of Melrose. He asked me to have a spot of coffee with him and his wife at the Abington Cafe, where Mr. Abington presented me with a big cigar, on which I puffed lustily in celebration of Mr. Abington's first offspring, having just made her bow into this world.

In passing the Millsap Drug, a little later, my attention was directed to the Picayune article, pasted slap in the middle of the show window, --on the plate glass, --the whole display section behind filled with Cane River plates. It was all done in a whizz, --the morning hejira, but pleasant and I was back home by 11.

5723

The Natchitoches Service League, which is so e sort of a collection of the gentry about the Parish and in town asked me if I could engage Mrs. Sterling to speak in the theatre at the college on the 4th Monday in November, and I shall write her accordingly. I thought the League a little out of order, since they might well do their own corresponding, but some of the members are under the impression I am acquainted with the lady and might use persuasive pressure on her to come, and of course I am glad to do so on their behalf. They asked me, too, if I would introduce the lady if she does journey up this way. On this I demurred temporarily, at least.

I was interrupted at this point by the tap of a belated secretary and as I need to make an envelope for Martha Robinson, I had to remove this page. Her letter, more or less, speaks for itself, although who the gentleman may be whom she mentions, I never heard of, but assume he is some Louisiana publisher. Perhaps Saturday will tell, but I shall write her in the mean time, even though, should she chance to come this way, she will not receive my letter before she leaves the Crescent City.

This afternoon came to see me this afternoon and give a report on the Grandpere turn over, so to speak. It appears they sold 8 or 10 dozen, which wasn't bad as a starter, and they asked if they might get more of the same item a month hence, should members of their congregation ask for some at Christmas time. They also pointed out that instead of celebrating the 100 anniversary of the Parish in June of 1953, they have decided to hold the festivities in the autumn when it is cooler. Not a bad idea, I think, and probably it will be more lucrative, too, since cotton money will then be easier. They thought they would really need some plates then, and we ought to be able to assist them, I think. The Reverend Fathers expressed their appreciation for the product which had been provided for their bazaar, and so I guess everybody was pleased all around, and, I hope, most of all, the mulattoes who acquired them.

Last night I felt like the astronomer with a poor telescope who by figuring out the refraction of light rays from visible stars is positive another luminary must be in a certain spot even though it cannot be seen by the telescope to hand but later is discovered to be there when the stronger telescope becomes his. In chapter 5 of the Jefferson biography there was an enumeration of places visited by Jefferson and Marie Cosway, -- "Saint Germain-en-Laye, the rainbows at the Machine of Marly, the Chateau, park and statues of Marly, Louveciennes, etc."

confirming my speculations on Marly, following my initial inspection of the lady out at the University of Virginia.

5724

Memorandum:

The marvelous, cloudless weather continues, ---but---

Uncle Sam, through his postal service, just about snowed me under.

I have gone through some of the letters, --none of them from unexpected sources and most of them from regular correspondents, but somehow they all happened to arrive about the same time.

I guess the one from Madam Mamoulides, --what a name, --is about the nicest. I am bound to respond to it promptly, although there's a lot of "must stuff" that will have to be ground out (growned out, I guess, would be better) -- before I fold up my beard tonight. Poor Mr. Jefferson sits here so invitingly, and I should so much prefer a quiet evening with him, although I am bound to fore-go that enchantment in favor of the clatter of this machine.

And speaking of Mr. Jefferson, I did a little run with him last night, and liked what I read. I believe it was chapter 6 which spoke of "My Heart and My Head" letter to Miss Cosway, suggesting it was interpreted by many of people in as many different ways. Mr. Malone understood it to be a polite method Mr. Jefferson employed to acquaint the lady with the fact that his head had gained final control, although the friendship was to continue indefinitely. I suppose it was in the same chapter, or the following that Malone gave quite a symposium on Jefferson's enthusiasm for architecture, and remarked that one of the Jefferson favorite buildings in Paris was the Hotel de Salm. I don't know if you are acquainted with it or not. It was built just before the Revolution, and if I remember correctly Josephine and her children, -- and I'm sure about Hortense, staid there prior to the Revolution as guest of Madame de Salm. After the Revolution it became the Legion of Honor palace which it remains today. It is more or less on the left bank of the Seine, --quite definitely, as a matter of fact, but more or less opposite the Louvre. From the outside, it somehow reminded me vaguely of this building whenever I saw it to pass the Frick mansion on 5

Thursday, October 16th, 1952.

Rice Cafe 10/13
D.D. 10/13
Postell 10/11
Robina 10/10
Marybeth 10/13
Dora 10/17
Kew 10/17

5725

5725

In one of the letters I had left kicking about for some days, thinking it from some person of no interest in Alexandria, I got around to skim through a part of it today, and discovered it was an invitation from the President of the Historical Society to harangue that august body with Bishop Greco on November 10th. I guess I had better answer that one forthwith, too.

One or two from Dora expressed approval of the Natchitoches business relative to the statue, and expressed himself as thinking I was right in casting about with the idea of doing a plate for the Louisiana Purchase business.

I have long thought of dashing off a business letter to la Cowperthwaite on allied matters, and shall take up this point at the same time. Perhaps it wouldn't be a bad idea to establish elations with New Orleans and Shreveport porcelain people, even though Cane River stuff might not move in those respective regions. Perhaps all such houses might do something with a Louisiana Purchase number, which I shall somehow contrive along lines which the signed plates and publicity have already suggested as standard something or other. I shall try sortin' out some of the other letters, --none of any particular moment, but most of them on the pleasant side, and even Mrs. Holloman's casual apology for jumping over the traces the other day is more in the right direction, leading me to believe the dab of ginger I inserted in my response had a salubrious effect. Apparently it, among other things, impelled her and her husband to pay their respects to Mrs. White, which isn't too soon, since that lady can't live much longer.

And there was a letter from the Consul General, requesting some more particulars which I had better get off to him pretty soon. In these days of trans-Atlantic telephones, there is no reason why the Reverend Bonnet couldn't call the Ministry of Beaux Arts and ask them to toss a statue of Quatorze in the direction of the first passing battleship and get the thing going in this direction, but you know how Governmental red tape gets things so tangled that probably it will be time for the 200th anniversary celebration of the Louisiana Purchase before the proper officials get around to make up their minds.

This is a poor letter, but perhaps I shall do better on the morrow. But it has been pleasant rambling around conversationally with little Miss Lee before rolling up my sleeves and getting to work...

Re
La Purchase
plate mfg.

Re: statue

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Anne Parrish 10/13
Mrs. Rayer 10/14

The mail continued heavy but containing nothing of much importance. I found that I had written a letter to the Natchitoches people, and that I had also written a letter to the Consul General. I found that I had also written a letter to the Consul General. I found that I had also written a letter to the Consul General.

Memorandum:

How nice.....

As you noticed from the envelope itself, your gift of the two ribbons reached me this morning, and no one knows better than you, --as from yesterday's memo, that this machine was beginning to approach the vanishing point, so far as readability was concerned.

I should have knocked off a letter yesterday to the Consul General but what with the faintness of the ribbon, it didn't seem to me better to delay the matter until something more positive by way of ink came to hand. Where I thought it was coming from, I know not, but I had had in mind to ask Celeste to do a bit of shopping for me when going to town on Saturday, after which I would undertake to do a catch up on some of the "must stuff" that would be better contrived if the prospective reader didn't have to get out his pince-nez to make out the blur.

I have been impressed by Peter's tendency to worry about a new typewriter ribbon. The last one he put on came from his Sister, and the little steel ball that reverse the ribbon was so thin that Peter, who never tapped a key on this machine, complained bitterly about the Wenk thinness. When he passed this way this evening and asked him to rig up a new ribbon, he re-acted as though it were his, not my birthday, and when he got to attaching the end of the ribbon and noticed the quality of the reversing gadget, he grinned all over and declared:

"You ain't got to tell me who done sent this here ribbon. I know it ain't from them Wenks because only that lady what I met in the road with you all that night, this is the right kind of stuff and she is the onliest one that knows about such things."

Amen, Peter. You took the words right out of my mouth.

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The mail continues heavy but contains nothing of much importance, although, if I can find them, the letter from Dr. John Kyser, or rather his wife, and perhaps the one from "Quantness" will be found entertaining. The Georgetown lady writes so pleasantly, it is a pity she doesn't more frequently borrow a correspondence line of endeavor.

As for the letter from Mrs. Kyser, it was nice of to write that the 1714 business to blaze against the midnight sky in the environs of Natchitoches is to be effected. I must write her tonight, suggesting that the word "Founded" be eliminated from the signs and that simply the digits be employed.

Poor Mr. Jefferson continues to sit silently along side me, without making a peep. I am on the threshold of the chapter, -- 7, I think, -- of his tour from Paris southward through Dijon, Avignon, Aix-en-Provence, Nîmes, Orange, Genoa, Milan, and back to Nice, Bordeaux, Nantes which was Mr. Bachelier's home town, -- and thence back to his home on the Champs Elysees. With my right hand able to pass from this keyboard to the reading machine without so much as the necessity of turning my body in that direction, I seem to marvel at my fortitude in resisting what is a vast temptation. But "new to the line" I must, and a flock of letters must be knocked off before beard folding time.

It is perfectly logical, I suppose, that in pondering on a suitable design for the Louisiana Purchase plate, I should ask myself why nobody has ever turned out a Mardi Gras plate, too. If the initial design could be so attractive as to make other ones futile, this item ought to roll down through the years as long as this annual Spring Festival of the Crescent City lasts. I must accordingly cast about to see if anything of the sort has been done, but without awaiting the results I feel I must write Rock Hall tonight, asking La Cowperthwaite to give some thought to what arrangements she thinks would be fair to her and me regarding such a matter. At the same time, without identifying any of the places or institutions by name, I shall inquire what parallel arrangements she and I might make for our mutual satisfaction concerning various the creation for various societies, of plates which I would toss off for the delectation of the visitors to various shrines throughout Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi. The Audubon Oakley shrine, -- which I shall be careful not to name, is an excellent case in point. I think Mrs. Sterling would be entranced at the prospect of such an item, and it might benefit lots of people, including the Rock Hall element and our own. But now to work, and bless you for this day's gift....

5728

5728 *clipping re L. Purchase*

*plates for the Garden Clubs
Natchez, St. Francisville etc.*

Sunday, October 19th, 1952.

Memorandum: How nice to find your Monday letter in Saturday's post, but how "un-nice" that you had to be stricken with that business that gets inside one and by some curious contrivance which I have never understood, somehow seems able to double one up in a jiffy, suspend all interest in everything, and flatten one out on the "holding shelf" for a shorter or a longer time.

Naturally I found myself wishing you had some of the lady doctor's magical medicine which might or might not have corrected everything in a twinkling. I hold the thought with all my might in hoping that by late now, you are once more back on the high road to normalcy. But if you have or have not attained the level, do, I pray you, go like a snail until you are assured that all is well again.

But even though you may in truth be back to vim and vigor, I warn you to brace yourself when I confess to you I have another idea. Really, I can only feel sorry for you when I picture in my mind's eye what a harbinger of boredom those four words must create, for that means an endless rigamarole on my part which can't possibly be of more than secondary interest to anybody, but, for the sake of Truth, I must confess I might append the phrase, "for no one but you", since, in reality, little Miss Lee somehow always seems to grasp what I am driving at, in spite of all the talk dished out to explain the thing.

Here is the latest:

I am pondering on the idea of doing a series of plates that ought to entrance the members of Garden Clubs. As an example, let's take Natchez or St. Francisville as the simplest. There are about two dozen mansions on the two pilgrimage tours. There are at least a couple dozen other plantations, as for instance, Laurel Hill, not on any pilgrimage. Now, what could be more entrancing than putting the likeness of each plantation in the center of a plate, a little smaller space than, say, Grandpere occupies, and then, about the edges, ketch in the salient features of the garden of the place, inserting whatever important

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physical or historic feature might be associated with it. With such an assortment of crockery, the passing pilgrims would be enchanted, I hope, but that would be the gravey section, for it is my idea to address each of the garden clubs in his own particular plate, and the combined interests of the several members would energize themselves to dispose of as many plates to other garden Clubs as possible. The vogue will be set for as many people to obtain as complete a set as possible, and when the Garden Clubs send out their annual literature, a cut of one of the plates can be substituted for one of the illustrations in the folder, and so the thing might sell enough plates for the benefit of the Club to pay for its printing and publicity. The plates themselves would serve as additional advertising and so everybody would benefit, --the manufacturer, the various Garden Clubs, --and, I hope, our side. How do you react to all this, --favorably or unfavorably. It seems to me I have something there, if I can just figure it out correctly so that everybody benefits and our side sufficiently dominates the market to hold the edge on any who might dream of muscling in. Besides, I think the things might be pretty. As a matter of fact, I wouldn't mind having a set myself, odd as that may seem.

In a rough manner, I have sketched out a design for the Audubon Oakley set up. A sketch of Oakley occupies the center of the plate. To the left is the "beautiful Eliza" frolicking in the garden with her hoop. Balancing her figure, --on the opposite side, is the barren twig of a huge branch of a live oak. On the barren twig a red bird is perched. Just below is the identical twig a bird is on the easel of a gentleman who is painting. The gentleman, as you have already surmised, is none other than James John Audubon or whatever his first names were. There would be a dab of writing at the bottom of the plate with a cartouche carrying the name of Audubon Oakley, etc. Don't you think such an item ought to roll in the names of Mrs. Sterling. Well, I shall not show it to her until I get some sort of arrangement figured out for the whole big business mentioned above through Rock Hall. But somewhere in all this there ought to be a kernel or nugget of gold, and it is my problem to rig up the thing to see what we can make of it. Blythe had a flock of ladies at her camp yesterday evening, and they passed this way at exactly the moment Sister blew in, so I never did see the latter, thank heavens. Blythe brought a basket banquet, half a roast chicken, salad, desert, wine, etc., and I'm not hungry, --as a result, 24 hours later.....

Mary Rhodes 10/16

5730

Monday, October 20th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find the likenesses of the African House in this morning's post. Let me hasten to add that they came through in perfect order, neither folded nor bent, and just as flat as a pancake.

I must say I think they came out splendidly. I have experienced so much pleasure in studying the composition, and try to analyse why I find this particular shot so unusually effective. When I first saw the picture on post card size, I concluded the striking effect in a large measure was due to the intensity of the light and shadow. I suppose there are perhaps several reasons, included in which must be the shaft of sunshine that illumines the space immediately in back of the building, --at the left, and perhaps the deep shadow fromed by the pecane branches, also on the left, but immediately in front of the building, somehow combine to give the house and its setting something more or a third dimension than is usually the case. Be that as it may, the whole thing is elegant and I think it will be an ornament to any page it may grace as an illustration.

The weather continues splendid and although there are pilgrims, there aren't too many of them. I had some lovely people from Atlanta, Iowa today. I thought I had heard the name of every town in that state, what with the years of listening over W. H. O. Des Moines, but I don't remember any other Atlanta, except Georgia.

There were a few letters in today's post but I got around to read only one or two, what with the confidential secretaries having failed to show up before supper, and people coming for supper which through all the schedule out of whack, so that I didn't get back to Yucca until long after dark. I did run through the enclosure of Mary Rhodes, and must report that it seems less hectic somehow than many that have gone before. I take it this must be due in part to her satisfaction with her new job. I am so glad for

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her and her husband's sake. If she follows her usual pattern, however, this one will perhaps last a year or so, after which it will be something else. Off hand, I recall her connection with the Welfare Department, the Episcopal Church, the Red Cross, the Mayor's office, a lawyer's office, the Board of Aldermen and the present pleasing situation. I concur with Madam Marco that it is a great pity she flies about so much. But perhaps those of us who will put up with a lot to avoid the discomfort of getting adjusted to new surroundings and new people are failing to appreciate the exhilaration some people seem to get in just such changes.

I read a couple more pages from the Malone book and got Mr. Jefferson out of France in the autumn of 1789, and set up in business as Secretary of State in New York where he occupied a house "on the Broadway near Maiden Lane". Malone reports that during the fateful summer of 1789, Jefferson went to Versailles nearly every day. Four years before, he had been very critical of Louis XVI, and one must feel sorry for the Queen in those years if what Jefferson said about the King was true: "He hunts the stage every mornin' for half the day and is drunk the other half". By 1789 he seemed to view the King more sympathetically, and strongly recommended the monarchy be retained under a constitution not unlike the British rather than the American model. He that is to say, Mr. Jefferson regretted that the Queen did not join the great nobles when they emigrated in June. He viewed the demolition of the Bastille without comment but did contribute to a fund, raised in behalf of the families of the Royal officers murdered on the assault of that place.

I have run across but one statement in the book which greatly surprised me, but I have no reason to doubt its correctness. The author, in mentioning the house on the Champs Elysees about 1786, remarked that originally it had been built by the architect, Rousseau, for a mistress of one of Louis XV's ministers, and adds that it is the same Rousseau who later contrived the Arc de Triumpe. Off hand, one would assume a span of some 50 or 60 years might have intervened between the building and the monument (the Jefferson residence and the Arc), and it would certainly be remarkable if the same man had a finger in both pies. Possibly the plans of the Arc were drawn decades before the thing was finished, and if so, this would account for the passage of the years which not necessarily encompassed the life of the Rousseau person. Sorry I got so off the track.....

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Martha Robinson 10/19

Tuesday, October 21st, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Saturday letter in today's post. It seemed to jog along a day faster than sometimes. Only my second secretary showed up tonight, which is another way of saying that as he isn't too deft in handling the typed letter, he is even less gifted with the hand written alphabet, and while I believe I got most of the words, I shall have the pleasure on the morrow of catching up with No. 1 scribe and thus have the added pleasure of a second go-round with you.

I invite your attention to the enclosure from Martha Robinson. Like Life itself, there seems to be an odd mixture of the positive and negative, plus a sprinkling of perplexities.

To take up the last ingredient first, would you mind telling me how Mrs. Crager ever saw my manuscript. I feel quite certain Daisey in the Dell never sent it to her. That leaves only Hastings House, so far as I can figure. How do you explain it. Can it be the policy of Hastings House to send to other potential publishers the manuscripts which they aren't going to use but may consider, because of regional interest, they can interest someone else in the manuscript without consulting the author on the subject. This is the only possible explanation coming to mind. And if this be true, then the statement that Mrs. Crager tried to interest Hastings House in the manuscript is contrary to fact, since it appears that if anybody did any attempting to interest anybody in the thing, it must have been the other way around and Hastings tried to interest the Cragers. Be that as it may, it seems to me that the fact that anybody sent the manuscript to another potential publisher without consulting the author, the doings was distinctly out of order to begin with and that as a last resort, said sender was morally bound to advise the author that such a course, without consulting or consenting had been done, in order that the author wouldn't attempt contacts where manuscripts had already been rejected. The whole thing seems out of line to me. It may account for the prolonged holding of the manuscript by Hastings House, for I can think of no other way through which

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the Cragers might have seen the manuscript.

However, the pattern turned, I don't think much of it.

On the negative side, the answer will be No to her suggestion, --if I remember it correctly, that the scrapbooks be removed from Melrose after they have been micro-filmed. I have already explained to her in conversation that all the books at Melrose are considered by some members of the family as integral parts of the whole collection and that removal of one part would automatically mean removal of the whole, and that with the library gone, a need would come into being for doing over what once had been a library, --the wole lower floor of the big house, and that money would not be forthcoming, and therefore the w ole structure would tend to collapse. Besides, while I approve most heartily of micro-filming of the scrapbooks, there are two points to be considered: -- first that a tremendous amount of work would be required to remove personal letters from the books, many of them written by people still active, and often containing personal remarks about people still living which might easily form the basis of law suits against the writers of the letters, frank statements, for example, regarding the theivery of old Parsons in filching books from public libraries for his own collections, etc., and secondly, if this should be accomplished and the books micro-filmed, why shouldn't the films go to the research libraries and the originals remain put and thus keep the heart of Melrose, which the library is, intact.

Another negative must be forth coming, too, regarding her request to come for a visit, occupying little Miss Alberta's house. We do not have the proper servant list to effect such a proposition at the moment and certain plumbing and other details must be effected before the house can be re-occupied. Then, too, her personality inclines to worry J. A., and Dan doesn't like her and Sister's attitude may be well guessed, for be it remembered, Mrs. Robinson is mother-in-law to the five million dollars, left by Cousin Nanie Price to Dick Plaiter, husband of Madam Robinson's daughter, nearly everyone in and out of the Henry family feeling that at least a good slice of the five million should have come this way.

And finally, on the positive side, Mrs. Robinson is a force in New Orleans circles. Like Carolyn, she has all it takes to put over very desirable thing, but is not dependable tax in maintaining a given point of enthusiasm. Through her, someone might well be capable to string the manuscript together might be found and the book launched. Also through her good offices, much in the "flying saucer" might be furthered. I must now roll up my lseaves and rite her in such a way that the positive things may be nurtured, the negative disposed of without up-setting the applecart.....

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Miss Myra 10/16
Miss Hills 10/10

Wednesday, October 22nd, 1952.

Cloudless skies, mild temperatures and extreme drought continue as the order of the day.

Bishop Greco of Alexandria has gone on the air, calling for all Catholic Churches in his province to include prayers for rain in every Mass.

Memorandum:

A note from Mrs. Holloman indicates she is having an audience with the Bishop tomorrow to make arrangements for his appearance at the meeting of the Historical Society to say a few words of approval when I orate on November 10th. Perhaps I should be more in line at that meeting if I unveiled a new plate, depicting the high lights of the Flood, in some kind of a composite picture, with the Montrose Hills superimposed on Mount Ararat with the Ark and old Noah at the helm, surrounded by a flock of Cane River speed boats. What historical point this would demonstrate, I don't know but it might please the Bishop to thus catch a glimpse of what would happen locally if his admonition for rain prayers proved availing.

I managed to keep awake long enough last night to read a few pages of the Malone opus. There is a chapter about the creation of "The Federal City", as Washington, D. C. was styled at the time of its inception. I hadn't realized before how much Jefferson had had to do with the beginnings of this project. I gather that an Act of Congress, creating the project, delegated the execution to Washington and that Jefferson, both as Secretary of State and a confident of the President, did much of the planning in behalf of his Chief. Malone, as in every field, seems to have rounded up quite a bit of data about L'enfant who seems to have been about as disagreeable as he was gifted, which is saying a lot. The founding of the District of Columbia, the laying out of the thoroughfares, establishing sites for the Federal buildings and so on were in the hands of three Commissioners whose business it was to carry out Washington's ideas, usually set forth by him through Jefferson who appears to have contributed much on his own hook. But L'enfant si ply would not work with or accept direction from the Commissioners, and even brushed off

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the President's secretary when the latter, at Washington's direction, made a personal call on the architect to try to smooth things out. And so the President, after much forebearance, finally dropped him, but insisted on the Commissioners carrying out the architect's plans which both Washington and Jefferson approved of most highly.

I found several minor points about Jefferson that were interesting, as for example, his inclination to carry out his own ideas architecturally where ever he chanced to live, -- Parish, New York, Philadelphia, where he would rent a house but before occupying it, undertake various interior re-arrangements, the cost of which usually ran into more than the whole year's rent already agreed upon. Although meticulous about his private debts, --and he was probably bankrupt during the 1790's while Secretary of State, he never hesitated to carry out his architectural notions in the houses he rented, and was forever inviting kindred souls to share his home with him, explaining that two or three extra people in the house really cost nothing beyond the normal maintenance of his menage. What a man! It would probably seem a little far fetched to look for a parallel between Louis XIV as the ultimate autocrat and Jefferson as the last word in symbolizing the Democrat, still I find both men had a basic attribute, --getting the most out of the materials to hand. Their interest in architecture and building, their inclination to disregard financial considerations, their enjoyment of music, their determination to surround themselves with all the attributes of gracious living, all these considerations plus half a dozen others, somehow seem to place the two men in perspectives that are perhaps more identical than any other two characters of the 17th and 18th centuries which could be trotted out readily for comparison.

I think I shall ask the Library of Congress to do Louis Bertrand's Louis XIV in a French recording, for while the Cleveland Chase translation into English gives some concept of the original text, it omits some much and twists one or two points so that the prime flavor is somehow missing, and it is only in Bertrand's biography, I think, that the cultural side of Quatorze is set forth to a degree.

I guess the enclosures aren't much, but I send them along anyway. It is always good to hear from Miss Myra and the one from Madam Millsbaugh is certainly on the gay side. I have a couple letters, --out going -- sitting here on my desk, -- Rock Hall and so on, which I am pondering about before posting. So things turn and I hope winter hasn't caught up with you completely

5736

Carolyn re.
Helen Baldwin's
accident
Mrs. Norris 10/21
Mrs. Stow 10/21

Thursday, October 23rd, 1952.

Memorandum: A month or so ago, I wrote Carolyn in Washington, beginning the letter thus:

"Dear Carolyn, I live in a museum..... But, no, let's wait until the next page to go into that..." and so I ploughed through a couple of endless paragraphs, after which I went back to my initial statement, outlining what seemed a possibility as a story for The Post.

I mention this, since it makes clearer perhaps the reference to it in the enclosure. I must say Carolyn's account of Helen's condition is well done or at least I got that impression as I read her letter. Somehow the suspense was almost too well maintained, for I gathered from the opening lines that something even worse had transpired. But as the story progressed, I found myself somewhat relieved and it goes without saying I am "holding the thought" that having survived this long, her chances for recovery, although probably of prolonged duration, are on the hopeful side.

A few days ago when a New Orleans physician passed this way and I inquired after his wife whom I had met some years ago, he said she was in the hospital "for repair work" which he elaborated upon by explaining that in the medical profession that term is employed in cases where ladies have had babies and some surgical adjustments are required. I think it isn't very funny that Carolyn is being operated on today, but I must say I got a laugh out of her reference for the need of a repair job in her own case, what with her being the maiden lady she is. I must write her a line tonight and that might provide as good an approach as any.

I wonder if you get the same kind of glee when you have

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about a dozen books stacked up awaiting your reading, every one of which you want to start in on first. Perhaps I am the only person who is so silly, but I rather suspect you may well be in the same silly category. Of course I am entranced with the Jefferson thing I am doing, and today the postman brought me the Louis XI by Bertrand that I want to skim through, and with it "Royal Flush", which, I suppose is a novelistic rendition of the biography of Henriette d'Angleterre who, if memory serves, was sister-in-law of Le Roi Soleil. It is such a pity I have but one reading machine, for if I only had three, I might set all of them to turning at the same time.

I am glad the pretty red seeds, in part, clung to the magnolia hull that traveled along with the persimmons the other day, giving you some idea of their appearance in actuality, although you have seen the same thing in pictures and prints often enough no doubt. If I remember correctly, about the 5th plate in the old Audubon book I have carries a good illustration of the same thing. Be that as it may, I piled up a dozen of these cones on the little shelf just beyond the plate glass of the window on the far side of the aquarium here by my desk and this morning just after dawn while I was hammering away a mile a minute on this machine, my old friend, the mocking bird who lives in the crepe myrtle by the side gate into the white garden, was as busy as a bee, grabbing off his breakfast of the red seeds from the cones. On swallowing each, he would stretch his neck a little, gaze intently at me for half a minute as the thing was going down, and although we weren't more than a couple of feet from each other, with only the glass between, we would face each other eye to eye, neither of us apparently in the least worried by the proximity of the other.

I intended thanking you before this for setting me straight about the Allister Cook broadcasts, - although perhaps I did. Anyway, thanks to your advice, I fished around in the ether waves on Sunday night and ran slap into him, and it was a pleasure. Last night I was interested in what Ed. Morrow had to say about "horoscoping" the impending election. As I recall, he counted up about 60 electoral votes for each candidate of which he felt reasonably certain, but for the additional hundred odd, required to turn the trick, he couldn't figure. That's precisely where I find myself. Surely if the millionaires can swing it, the General is as good as elected; if the rest of the population has any sense, the Governor will make it. Lucky man, --which ever one looses.....

I wonder if you get the same kind of bird when you have

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5738 Chas. Cunningham 10/24
Madam Marco 10/20

Friday, October 24th, 1952.
Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter with enclosures in today's post.

It is playing the role of Guaranteed Happiness for the Morrow, since a series of hurly-burries interrupted the reading before I really got started. But it is such a pleasant feeling to know it is resting safely in the armoire, awaiting another dawn.

But I can acknowledge receipt of the African House card and I can thank you for sending along the address of The Pelican Press. How amazing you are. I really wanted the Pelican Press address but didn't want to ask Martha Robinson for it. I suppose I might have looked in the New Orleans telephone book for it, but didn't realize it was in the Crescent City, having assumed it to have been in Lake Charles or some other place in the State but not in New Orleans.

The one vast drawback about Pelican Press, and I must explore it a little more before I come to a clear understanding of its status, but somehow, I believe, it is mixed up with Stewart Landry, and he is so anti-negro that he would think himself damned forever if he ever had anything to do with or permitted any house with which he is connected to print anything dispassionate about a colored person. I think I mentioned that in that "Plantation Life Along the Mississippi" he demonstrated his feelings to the ultimate by referring to the African House as the "so called" African House. Of course his volume, "Cult of Equality" set forth clearly enough just how crack pot he is on the subject, but the "so-called" business takes the cake, and naturally anything real about the Cane River country would never get to first base if he had any say about it.

What he had in mind for a Melrose book, I gathered from what he said when here, was to begin the tale with the year 1898, devote the whole thing to the Madam, and say nothing about the 18th and 19th centuries, which is the biggest piece of tomfoolery I ever heard of.

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Dr. Russell, widely known in this area, including Texas, as an ornithologist of distinction, --he lives near Fort Worth, dropped in to see me. He had been planning to come here for the last 50 years but never got around to it until today. He was enchanted with what he had to see and I must say my feathered friends seemed to rise to the occasion. My old friend, the mocking bird, as referred to recently, came over to feed on the magnolia seeds while we were standing by the shelf on the gallery, and a couple of warblers and no end of blue jays and cardinals seemed to sense a special visitor had made his rounds just for their benefit. The day was sunny and warm and a big hand-out in the bird bar had just been carried through before Dr. Russell's unannounced visit. We talked of birds and of Audubon and Wilson and all the rest, and Dr. Russell threatens to come back again without waiting for another half century to elapse. I also made the most of his visit by enticing him to help decipher the scrawl from Mrs. Brandon. He seemed about her age and I thought, therefore, he might be able to make out her writing better than the secretaries. But he found it difficult. If I understood the reading correctly, it is Susie Wailles who has broken her hip. This seems beyond belief, and yet that is what I gather. Those poor Wailles girls, who ever heard of two sisters at their advanced age both being laid on the shelf with broken legs or hips or whatever it is. I shall knock off a line for it, but shall name no names when referring to the accident until I am a little more sure of just whose leg got broken. I suppose Susie must be in her 70's, and old enough to know better. What a life those two must be leading, and yet, in spite of my genuine sorrow for them, I must say I feel just as full of pity for poor Maude who apparently is no spring chicken and must find life pretty rugged, --working all day and two invalids on her hands when day is done. The worst part of it is that I suspect there is a shortage of money in that menage, in spite of all the sailing around Susie has been going in for during the past year. Well, one thing is certain, she won't be sailing around much within the immediate future, --that's one sure thing.

I finished the Jefferson second volume last night before getting to hear Mr. Stevenson in Cleveland. This second volume of Malone's study leaves me just as impatient as did the first volume, for now I am impatient to get to the third which, for all I know, hasn't even been written as yet, although I hope it is well on its way. I suppose the next volume of Freeman's Washington will be coming out before long, and that will dovetail very neatly into the Malone out put.

The enclosed note is from Charles Cunningham. So much to talk about.....

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Sunday, October 26th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Tuesday letter in Saturday's post.

It is so good to have a glimpse of all that swirls around the busy isle of Manhattan, with the manifold doings of little Miss Lee, the latest wrinkle from the lands of old Simon Bolivar, and the evidences of thoughts and actions expended in behalf of Lestan, 2nd.

It was so kind of you to send along particulars regarding the Purchase. I am so glad to have the precise dates, both of the sale of Louisiana and its transfer. Falling as these do, between April and December, the months in between seem to be most auspicious both for New Orleans and Natchitoches, what with the Lenten and Spring fiestas in New Orleans and the pre-holiday celebrations that annual are going full tilt along Cane River as the year plays out. If old Bonnet will only hurry up and make up his mind, then plans in this area can be charted a little. It will be "touch and go" if the thing is ever accomplished within the year anyway, and as New Orleans will probably concentrate most of its stuff on the Spring angle, that ought to leave Natchitoches to garner statues without so much scuffling from the lower Delta.

What with the weather continuing cloudless, save for the white haze softening the blue, the result of numerous forest fires all about, the situation is ideal for road running and the pilgrimage business has been brisk over the week end, -- Florida, Oklahoma, lots of Iowa and various sections of Louisiana being represented. One lady, a Mrs. Butler, having seen the Picayune article, persuaded relatives visiting her from Massachusetts, to bring her down this way. She had disdained purchasing a Grandpere plate in town, preferring to get one from me. That was a pleasant sentimental gesture, and I was sorry I didn't have a Grandpere to roll in her direction. But Rock Hall ought to get some more to me soon, and this will satisfy a few other sentimental souls in the immediate neighborhood, for today two mulattoes came to see me at different times, asking if they could get a Grandpere plate to send to this or that relative away off in the North or West.

2540

5741

Monday, October 27th, 1952.

I'm so glad you were lucky enough to catch Mrs. Roosevelt on the air the other night. Perhaps I have remarked in an earlier Memo that I was that lucky, too. Yesterday a brief news report on the radio mentioned that Mr. Stevenson was having breakfast with the lady at Hyde Park. I am so glad. So much of her life up to 35 was so lacking in happiness. I invariably feel a special little glow around the heart when I learn that something pleasant has happened to her in these later years. I still think the thing that pleased me most was that time a year or so back when the fountains of Versailles in mid winter were set to splashing for her special delectation when she was passing through the park. Somehow it was an expression of the ultimate by something supreme in Europe for someone who is about the last word in person ality for someone from America, and such examples of politeness must register mightily in the heart of one who still must carry a lot of shadows in her own breast.

I got around to do a little reading last night,-- sampling a page or two from "Royal Flush" which opens in the Louvre where Henriette d'Angleterre are slowly freezing while Charles 1st of England is awaiting execution in far off London. I also dipped into a couple of chapters of Louis XIV, according to Louis Bertrand, and found it as engaging as before, even though the errors in Cleveland Chase's translation still remain as glaring as they struck me the first time I read it, following a bit of the translation I did of some of the book on my own hook. But in spite of the omissions, twists of original meanings and condensation, it still gives a concept of Louis XIV that surpasses anything else I know of in English.

Late this evening, Ed Rand came to see me, bringing a flock of people with him. But I was glad we had an opportunity to chat a little when he came by to see me before letting his guests in the front gate. He says his business, --insurance, looks as though it is going to provide him with a living, and I am so glad he is making out nicely in that line of endeavor.

Often this week end my thoughts have turned toward Adam Marco and Susie with their borken hips and Helen and Carolyn in their flattened out situation. How odd all these things should have transpired as they did.

I have neglected the Underwood today and so must roll up my sleeves now and get going. It has been such a nice week end, thanks to the gleams of sunshine slanted this way by little Miss Lee....

2543

5742 Ethel Holloman

10/23

Monday, October 27th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It's wonderful how dumb some people can sometimes be. I cite my own case as a prize example.

Father Callahan received an invitation to a meeting of the Historical Society in Alexandria on November 10th, --and heaven or hell alone knows by whom it was sent.

He expressed the thought to the lady across the fence that it would be delightful to go together, his assistant Fathers, along with her and the speaker of the evening. Celeste thought it a wonderful idea and chided me for not tell her about the business ere now.

In today's post came a note from la Montespan. As she is a friend of Mrs. Bowman, a member of the Society, and as the Town Talk will advertise the speech in advance, ---hummmmmmmmm.

I spoke to his majesty regarding the infinite possibilities. He dismissed the matter as of no moment, saying "she would never go to such a thing". I shall speak to him again about the matter. If I read the stars correctly, there's a pretty good chance I may back out at the last minute. After all, there will be some kind of a reception following the meeting. What an inspiration for me to harangue a crowd, knowing full well it may well include a couple of full sized atom bombs, scheduled to explode before the evening is finished. Thank you, No. But what puzzles me is why I didn't anticipate all this before I started the thing. Surely I should have my head examined.

With two weeks ahead of me, I ought to be able to solve this problem if I have any sense left at all. Perhaps I shall be able to do so as to everyone's safety and satisfaction, and in the mean time, I shall proceed on a day-to-day basis.

Last night I read a few more pages from the Bertrand opus. John Knight is the reader. His French pronunciation is good and therefore I am struck by two exceptions, wherein for Marechal Turenne, he pronounces it "Marechal Tuarene" and for Bussy Rabutin, he makes it "Bussy Arbutin". Isn't that odd.

5743

I found myself wondering as to what influences had been brought to bear on Senator McCarthy prior to the delivery of his obviously over publicized speech. The material didn't seem to have much by way of novelty in it and the way it was dished out seemed to suggest the Senator wasn't up to his usual outrageous self. Perhaps the version I heard at 8:30 was a transcription, for on occasion phrases were repeated much after the manner of the reading machine when something goes wrong with the record. The system over which he was speaking is very poor in this area, as the two outlets from which anything at all can be heard are so close to other stations that one hears two programs going concurrently which takes away much from effectiveness. My guess is that the performance gathered in no extra converts for the cause.

With the cotton ginning beginning to taper off, the amount of cotton hulls begins increasing. I had a couple of mountains dragged to Arenbourg today and thus a snug covering against the cold is guaranteed for the "children", not to mention a bountiful supply of extra food for them as the season advances and the hulls begin decomposing. Madam Regard remarked the other day that she could remember when she came to Louisiana 50 years ago, everybody was still burning the cotton seed. It's strange how slow people are to consider conserving the refuse resources, for plantations to the North and South of Melrose, --the Hyman Cohen below and the ex-Sam Tobin place above gaily discharge the gin's output of hulls slap into the river, --first rate fertilizer that certainly ought to contribute mightily to the growth of seaweed and whatever other aquatic vegetation flourishes in the water.

I must thank you again for having been so thoughtful as to send me the advertisement of historical plates in your next to the last letter. The knowledge that advertisement provided me with a comprehension that would have been a little confusing, had you not been so kind as to send it. Today, for example, came a woman from Houston, accompanied by her sister and brother-in-law from Massachusetts. I suppose the Houston lady had seen the Picayune article. Her Massachusetts people, hearing a discussion of the Cane River plates, mentioned they had seen them photographed in Time or Life, they weren't sure which. And as they were in this section of the state, they decided it would be nice to purchase them directly from the designer. This is the third time I have heard of the Cane River plates being nationally advertised. Isn't that confusion delightful, and wouldn't the real advertisers be disappointed that we should be enjoying additional publicity through their efforts with which we are in no way concerned.....

5744

Carolyn Ramsey 10/20

Tuesday, October 28th, 1952.

Memorandum: How nice to find your lovely letter of Thursday in today's post.

It is so pleasant at the end of the day to be able to spend a half hour such as I have just experienced, in sharing vignettes of you through its lines. I reckon a more rapid reader would have run through it faster but I find vast satisfaction in the slowness with which Lee proceeds in letters from little Miss Lee.

I liked the observations you had to make regarding Nina and possible designs, and tanks for telling me about the spelling, --a matter I would not know about if someone like you, so thoughtful on every point, did not call it to my attention. Nina herself has mentioned it in the past, but I reckon I must have forgotten it, and I suppose that is more likely to make such variations in spelling, since I don't see it in print. I hope you will always let me know about such matters, since it is only through your kind offices that such points ever come to my notice and I should like to keep such things as much in line with actualities as possible.

As you point out, in the matter of the plates, there is much involved to put the thing over to advantage, and I shall give the whole subject some careful consideration before proceeding to any length. I think the idea sufficiently worth while to retain, even though realization of it must of necessity be delayed a little. Among other things coming under consideration would be financing the thing, but I think I could manage that without much difficulty by having the potential organizations for which they would be designed and manufactured underwriting the initial investment so that everything above that would be profit. I shall dwell on this point further as I give the matter additional thought.

5745

I laughed at the statement you quoted under the name of Mrs. Holloman, as photographer of "most" of the illustrations. As the picture of the big house was taken by Harry Smith, that just about leaves out everything, in view of the fact that the plates themselves were brought out under the auspices of little Miss Lee. But, as you opined, is proof that the Yucca pictures were in the original layout. I don't recall just what the wording under the Grandpere plate is, but when it was hurriedly read to me, it stuck me that there was something about that phraseology, too, that was obviously composed with a view to other pictures, and probably another arrangement of that picture of Grandpere, so far as the original scheme of the Picayune layout was concerned. But the important thing is that the plates were reproduced, although it must be said that the average reader of the Picayune would have found a heap more interest in the Cane River Country than in the other designs that appeared.

And how nice of you to mention extra copies of the article. I was supposed to receive a couple of extra ones which were to be brought by Dr. Rand who has not appeared with them as yet. I shall see him within the next couple of weeks, and if he forgot me, I shall let you know.

I am so glad Indian Summer made a return visit to Manhattan, and I hope it continues to linger. Jack Frost is supposed to make a round at this bend of the river tonight, and what with Carolyn in the hospital, I reckon it will be Spring before she gets any pictures. There was a letter from her today. She, you will recall, mentioned having to go in for repairs, and in dropping her a line, I mentioned a physician passing this way the day before, had mentioned a need for repairs which had put his wife in the hospital, explaining that "repairs" in his section of the medical profession, indicated post birth adjustments being required. I passed this news along to Carolyn, tossing in the observation that it was a pity I hadn't let her borrow the family bidet when she headed out for Washington and the State Department so that all this repair job would have been unnecessary. Hence her response.

Again, and for the billionth time, I must express my amazement at your wonderful powers of observation, as witness by your remembrance of the Hotel de Salm (Legion d'Honneur on the banks of the Seine. I cherish every word you had to say in reference to that matter and attendant ones. Now time does jog along, and yet because of the perfect harmony obtaining in certain quarters, time, in a way, doesn't seem to enter into things at all, for every day is but a continuation of yesterday's happinesses, thanks to you...

5746

Estelle Howard 10/29

29
Wednesday, October 29th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Saturday letter, so unexpected, in today's post. How nice that we could get this little chat in edgeways between jumps. I lingered a little longer on my side of the jump, however, and so did not quite finish your letter before an interruption forced me, at the close of day, to tuck the envelope in the armoire awaiting the morrow.

I read with interest your account of your surprise about the manuscript having appeared in New Orleans without any one having known about it until the Martha Robinsons of information came through.

Having learned, as we have, from Daisey in the Dell that Mrs. Crager leans in the direction of the "Tobacco Road" type of literature, one mustn't be surprised that she would find nothing to her liking in the Melrose document. Like Harnett Kane who supposedly has spent all his life in Louisiana and doesn't know a crepe myrtle or a sweet olive when confronted by either, how in the world could Tess Crager of the Faulkner school of grim realities be expected to comprehend what Melrose is all about. I suppose we are to gather from what little we don't know, that Hastings House sent the manuscript slap to her for an opinion by a Louisiana expert. She apparently kept it a long time and then returned it to Hastings House with a negative response which we could have told Hastings House in advance, had they advised us of their intention before hand. And Hastings House, in turn, sent the manuscript back to its starting point.

Surely Hastings House was distinctly out of order. As you remark in the case of James Cain writing to Wilkerson, the thing, if not remarkably unimaginative, was unethical. I shall await hearing from or seeing Martha Robinson, -- an event which will undoubtedly take place soon, and then after I learn what I can from that source, I shall drop a little note to Hastings House. So far as our manuscript is concerned, a complaint to Hastings House would be crying over spilt milk, but a protest on our part might well save someone else from a similar experience.

5747

And speaking of the Cragers, I wrote them a letter the other day, passing along the names of a couple of local people who wanted copies of their "Children of Strangers". In today's post came a copy of that new edition, as a present for me. I am sorry they wrote their names in it, or I would bounce it in the direction of 908. If you would like the book and would care to tear out the page on which my name appears, you are quite welcome to it. Just let me know if you should wish it. So far as preserving it as a souvenir of the publishers, it means nothing to me.

In making acknowledgement of their gift, I naturally made no reference to Martha Robinson's information, but merely thanked them and remarked that as festivities are planned for St. Augustin's Church this coming year, there will probably be several mulattoes present who may want the book if it is called to their attention and that I am always glad to mention their publication when pilgrims passing this way express interest in Lyle's novel. I believe the present edition is priced at \$3.00, but I suppose they may or may not write advising me on this point, although I did ask them about the point in an earlier letter, since pilgrims frequently inquire about its availability and price.

The forest fires about which the radio speaks and perhaps the newspapers mention, are still burning merrily. I know of no conflagrations in this immediate area but the drift of the smoke must be extensive since all last evening and last night and this morning the smoke was so thick in the air hereabouts that it was difficult to see very far, and the scent was strong in one's nostrils and the eyes smarted in consequence of its potency. Tonight the waxing moon takes on a persimmon color because of the haze, I suppose, and the Weather Bureau assures us that there isn't the slightest sign of rain between here and the Canadian border whence comes most of our weather at this time of year. I can find a letter recently to hand from Mrs. Howard I shall enclose it. I got a kick out of her impression she was having a Pontifical audience when last here. I don't seem to remember anything special about her visit but it is interesting that Texas, in this instance, should have stumbled over anything in my personality suggesting the Holy Papa. Madam Howard is a sight! On the political front, I have come to the conclusion Stevenson will win by a vote or two or Eisenhower by a landslide, --one or the other and I don't know which. I heard Madam Roosevelt introduce the Governor in Madison Square last night and hoped that you, too, were that lucky.....

5748

5748

*In Crager 10/27
Schwarzberg 10/28
Dora 10/28*

Thursday, October 30th, 1952.

Memorandum:

We had a good frost last night but it warmed up today, although the sun's rays cast scant if any shadows, what with the heavy gauze of smoke blanketing this whole region. The excessive drought not only keeps the forests as dry as tinder but the small patches of woods and even the grass along the highways are burning in patches here and there, just to keep the smudge-pot going. The woods were on fire between here and Montgomery last night and although they go the business is under control last evening, they are still smoldering in out of the way places. J. H.'s plantation at Cognac, --between Bermuda and Montgomery was sending up incense during the past 24 hours but, oddly enough, no place in the parish has had there been any report of farm buildings or crops being effected.

Shreveport issue a long range prediction for the status of the weather between now and next Tuesday's election, and it was "Fair without much change in temperature". When the clouds eventually make up their mind to put in an appearance, I suppose we shall be showered with oceans of water.

There was an odd assortment of mail today. If I have an opportunity to get the addresses from some of it, I will enclose or send it under separate cover. I think you will get as big a kick as I did out of the letter referring to my appearance before the Historical Society, wherein one of the officer officers quite seriously mentioned how he was looking forward to hearing and seeing me with "anxiety". I must mention that to Dr. Rand when I see him down yonder. I think he will like that one.

I shall respond in the negative to the Senior Class of the Montgomery High School, asking for a tour on the 7th. I shall reply affirmatively to some colored students of Alexandria, asking the same thing for the 5th. My schedule is rather heavy at the moment and if any corners have to be cut, they will be trimmed where the hillbillies are concerned and not at the expense of the colored folks.

5749

And speaking of letters, I wish Martha Robinson weren't so much like Carolyn Ramsey in the way get dilly-dallies about answering mail. I should like to hear from her before I respond to the Crager letter coming to hand today. I need scarcely tell you I will decline having anything to do with Crager publications. Perhaps I may be interested in her counter offer regarding the plates. Perhaps la Robinson will be passing this way eventually and I can get a little clearer picture of the Basement Bookshop set up. I can't imagine anybody in New Orleans being interested in Cane River creations, --devoted to that region, --but something like the St. Francisville creations might get somewhere. I shall not rush in to a response and naturally shall not close the door tight. Perhaps, too, I can put la Crager in touch with somebody in town who might be interested in carrying her publications, and I shall use the telephone to that end. I suppose my impression of the Cragers is something of a composite picture of a variety of word pictures, etched by Lyle and others, on which in recent months, ~~xx~~ has been added that of Daisey in the Dell. From everything I have heard about them, I conclude they are fine people but possessed of personalities that wouldn't precisely jibe with my own and I prefer to keep relations on a polite but not too friendly a basis. "Pontifical" might be the word Mrs. Howard would employ.

I am glad you sent along the clipping about Alice Walworth. It seems so long since I have heard anything about her that I was beginning to wonder if she was still in circulation. She is another one who suffers from writer's cramp, which is a great pity, so far as her friends are concerned, since many of them would enjoy the contact of letters with a person so gifted and so delightful. Come to think of it, perhaps that is just the reason she doesn't bother about writing since the delights of her personality always provide her with admiring friends where ever she chances to be, and therefore with all that constantly bubbles about her, she finds adequate companionship among those close to her physically and accordingly can assume everyone else from whom she is absent finds sufficient contacts that are equal to the delights of herself, making correspondence unnecessary for herself and her friends when she moves on to some other geographical situation. Poor Alice.

And now I must roll up my sleeves and have a go at some letters before fishing around in the enter to see what candidate is holding forth tonight. I hope the quiet of your own menage and the absence of guests makes such "fishing" possible, too.....

5750

his harmonides
10/26

October 31st, 1952, being Friday,
when witches are said to ride
their broom sticks.

Memorandum:
Another lovely day, with a breeze of 15 to 20 miles an hour, fanning the forest fires anew, it is said, and especially around Shreveport and south of there, even into Bienville Parish which gets it pretty close to Briarwood, since a part of Briarwood, I believe, is in Bienville Parish. I think of the sisters Dormon often these days; what with their house slap in the middle of the woods.

This morning Celeste and Madam Regard took off for Mansura. They always go there for All Saints. Madam Regard will remain there while Celeste goes on to New Orleans for a few day's frolic. J. H. wasn't here for supper tonight, -- business in Alexandria, I suppose. I hope it doesn't move up this way over the week end.

In Mansura are buried Dr. Regard and his two sons. I try to be charitable when Celeste sometimes gets on her high horses, for I realize she may well have inherited some of her father's temperament, for Dr. Regard was difficult. He once gave up his practice, owned a couple of big plantations, built a bank and ran his holdings up to a million. He divorced Madam Regard after the children were grown up, married his secretary, and then, divorcing the latter, remarried Madam Regard. He was finally wiped out financially and went back to his medical practice. A tyrant in the home, so far as domestic arrangements, food, etc., were concerned, Madam Regard must have had the patience of Job to have put up with him. The Madam used to giggle in her beard about something that once happened in the Regard menage. It seems Dr. Regard didn't like the aroma of the bread that was rising in the pantry. He picked up the pan and tossed the whole thing out of the window. A prize rooster, belonging to a neighbor, had strolled into the Regard garden, and somehow became entangled in the dough, got bogged down, and was a perfect ruin so far as plumage was concerned before he was extricated. I like that tale pretty well myself.

The incoming mail continues fulsome. Something happened

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to the secretaries this evening. I reckon they are all too busy polishing up their brooms to bother about correspondence. Perhaps I shall catch up with them over the week end.

Last night's frost put the finishing touches on the greenery on most of the more delicate things. There's no point in picture taking, so far as color goes, as between now and next March. Did I mention that I plan moving the bananas occupying the middle section along the front gallery. Later in the season, I shall set them out on a double curve, running from the last post at the extreme East and West end of the gallery, so the wall of greenery next summer will form a court from the gallery to the pot, at which point the new avant cour will expand into another semi-circle, as it does now. I envision the effect as being rather pretty and withal ultra tropical in appearance as one approaches Yucca.

Somebody or other in the seed business in Dallas wrote the other day, asking how I would like some bulbs. I don't remember the people but I answered and asked about zinnia seed. Heaven knows there are plenty of bulbs around this place but I think oceans of zinnias next year would be nice. Among other places they would look nice, I think would be around the big pot, for the velvety colors of their blossoms ought to shine to especial advantage against such a metallic background as the rusty curve of the cauldron. Zinnias seeds aren't planted to advantage in this area until early April, so I guess I am anticipating the zinnia situation far enough in advance. I think one can get white zinnias, and I think some of them would look pretty in deep summer around the base of the sun dial. I shall plant some, too, with the verbena in the big pots atop the metal columns from the Tucker garden, --if I ever get the latter. They usually are in flower for at least 6 months of the year, --which is better than most flowers do, and besides I like their old fashioned gaiety. I know not why, but they always remind me, --a big bed of variegated colors, of those old patch work quilts that a generation or two ago, were forever being contrived.

I heard an announcement over some National Broadcasting station last night that gave me the shivers. The speaker said on election night all programs would be cleared and that a vote by vote account of the election returns would be given. I hope the fellow was talking through his hat. With 50 or 60 million people expected to cast ballots, a vote by vote report would certainly get tiresome after the first few months, I should imagine.

And so we head into a week end. I shall be thinking of little Miss Lee and hoping hers is restful and nice.....

5752

Robina 10/30
Janel Miller 10/29
Mrs. Galland 10/28

Sunday, November 2nd, 1952.

Memorandum:

Hurly burly is the word for the week end, but withal a rather pleasant one. And the skies remain cloudless, save for the smoke, and the promise straight ahead is for fair weather.

Ben came to see me rather early this morning. What with the cotton crop harvested, he is terminating his year, as of November 1st instead of December 31st. He is going into some kind of Government business, I believe, --perhaps one of the Agricultural agencies, --F. H. A., or some such. He is such a nice person I shall miss him much, even though we seldom did ever see each other, save at dinner.

A letter in Saturday's post from Robina mentioned the possibility of coming down this way next Sunday. I concluded she meant a week hence. When she appeared on my gallery just after dinner, I was quite surprised. She brought a friend with her and a bottle of good Sherry and we had a pleasant and prolonged sitting, interrupted now and then by other callers, during which interludes, Robina could give her companion a little tour of the place.

Mrs. Andrew Bowman was one of the callers, bringing her husband and two guests with her. She wanted some more plates, and said perhaps there would be a stepped up demand for them this week as a result of the daily broadcasts about them over central Louisiana radio stations. She asked me if I didn't think the remarks about me over the air today had been excellently contrived on the K A L B and the A.B.C. network. I didn't know any such business was going on and forgot to ask her if it was in connection with the Historical Society meeting a week hence, which I suppose it is, or some other angle. It seems rather early to be beating the drum for a November 10th meeting, but perhaps the radio stations find themselves with time on their hands, now that the politicians have just about folded up their beads, and so perhaps they will grab at anything to fill in space. I wish I had asked at what time this subject is touched on for I should like to have some idea what bait is being held out

5753

5753

in order that I may the better adjust my own remarks when the session gets under way.

And while the Bowmans and Denholmes were milling about in the gardens, other people came with whom I did not bother, what with my intentness on settling matters with la Bowman, and getting that contingent on its way in order to pick up conversation with Robina. After the departure of the Shreveport-Alexandria guests, I approached the other people who had been strolling about for quite a long time and discovered them to be the Hollomans. I took the opportunity to dictate a rough skeleton for the Yellow Fever article for the Picayune for 1953, suggested she consult some newspaper files in New Orleans to discover if Louisiana did anything about the Louisiana Purchase 100th anniversary in that year of "the scourge", and gave her a tentative account of what I shall probably say in Alexandria of the 10th, and suggested she contact a New Orleans representative of the Associate or the United Press, so that some publicity may be forthcoming as a result of the speech in behalf of the statue, providing during the coming week things have unfolded any further in reference to the Government of France on this matter. If the red tape boys are still busy unwinding red tape, perhaps a little blast in the press might encourage them to work a little faster. I must admit it seems a little premature to express gratitude through the press for a gift which hasn't actually been offered as yet, but airing the possibilities of such an expression of gratitude in anticipation of such a gift might, indeed, tend to give the dawdlers a push and an inspiration to make up their minds so that central Louisiana can begin formulating plans for the festivities.

I read a few pages from "Aoyal Flush" last night. It is an English recording by a reader who puts lots of zest into his words. The story opens in and around Paris (Chaillot, St. Germain-ey-Laye, etc) at the time of the Fronde, with Henriette d'Angleterre the central figure, although her mother, the widow of the recently be-headed Charles 1st, dominating most of the scenes. Louis XIV and his brother, Monsieur, who will later marry Henriette, are about 12 or 14 years old at the time the story begins. The historical aspects are neatly worked into the novel without seeming to be more than casual incidents, and while the tale possesses nothing of the A. Dumas, pere, verve for exciting one's curiosity as to what is going to happen next, still the picture it presents of the people and the times is expertly handled.

A big orange colored moon is up and I must go give a be-lated supper to Celeste's animals and my own, after which I must knock off some letters and thence to bed. I hope your week end has been as pleasant but less active.....

5754

Rudolph 10/31

Monday, November 3rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

The primary difference between today and yesterday is an East wind which probably is no help to the forest fire fighters.

An absence of pilgrims gave me much freedom to do a bit of gardening, and thanks to the visit of Jack Frost last week, there are plenty of canna beds that should be put to rights and bedded down for the winter. With the thermometer "hoovering" around 80, a short sleeved, short tail shirt was quite adequate, and it seems a little odd banketing plants in such temperature. But the cotton hulls will help hold down the moisture that is applied by hose, and with the promise for cooler days beginning on the morrow, I reckon the plants wont make the mistake of supposing Spring has arrived.

Everyone continues to speculate on the results of tomorrow's election. J. H. was chatting with Earl Long who declared Eisenhower is going to win by a landslide and predicts his administration will be about the poorest we have had in quite a while. As a politician, Mr. Long apparently doesn't think very highly of the General's chances of shining in the No. 1 executive post. As for myself, I can't figure out how anybody in the executive department can do much if the same type of Congress is returned to office. For the next two years at least, there will be many a program submitted and rejected, I suppose, and except for policies favorable to big business, I reckon the government will be one of those do-nothing things, with efforts by the executive short circuited by the legislature at about every turn.

I heard Lowell Thomas tonight for the first time in quite a while. I thought his presentation of political news fairly well balanced but showing an unmistakable preference for the General. I accordingly looked forward to hearing how Ed. Morrow would handle the same basket of chips. I thought he handled the problem with objectivity. His performance recalled his promise at the outset of the campaign to do throughout just what he finished up with on this final night before election. As I look back over the months since Chicago, I am surprised to find how few commentators I have listened to. The little voice which has been with me since

1872

5755

Reverend "Kattleborn" I have heard only once or twice. He definitely was beating the drum for NBC and big money. I have heard Elmer Davis most consistently. He has obviously been for Stevenson all the way through. Circumstances prevented me from hearing Martin Legonski very much. I must say he rivaled Ed. Morrow in trying to keep to an objective presentation. His utter disgust for such people as McCarthy, Jenner, Nixon and the like, however, seemed to keep his big guns pretty much trained on those outrageous personalities, so while his listeners might not be able to say he favored Stevenson, they couldn't be mistaken that he wasn't for a flock of the noisy big shots in the General's entourage.

One more political thing, and I'm finished on that score for this sitting. The Louisiana ballot is an extensive one, and includes about 34 Amendments to the State Constitution, -- and this part of the ballot itself ought to require any thoughtful person about an hour to check intelligently. The polls open tomorrow morning at 6 and close tomorrow night at 9. It is calculated 12 minutes will be required to count each ballot. If each place where the votes are counted can absorb them at only five an hour, Louisiana ought to know which way the vote went along about Thanksgiving, I should imagine. I suppose the larger cities may have voting machines which will make tabulating automatic, I suppose, but I don't know if Amendments are handled through voting machines or not, but assume they are not. Be that as it may, it looks as though the politicians counting Louisiana votes this year ought for once to earn their money.

Two things Robina mentioned yesterday which I think I did not mention. She is voting for Eisenhower although she regrets Taft, "obviously a better man" didn't get the nomination. Referring to her conversation with Carolyn on the phone, she said Carolyn was putting through a call to Helen's doctor that night, on the assumption a physician might speak with greater frankness to a distant friend than a relative present at the bed side. It was Carolyn's understanding that Helen, although responding to requests to move her eyes to right and left and so on, she had not as yet uttered a word. I have written Lucille a couple of letters, supposing she is back from Chicago, but she is a poor hand at correspondence, and I reckon word will come through from some other source before we hear from her.

My more chance all five time pieces in this house have stopped and apparently require tinkering. I always take my little leather traveling clock to bed with me, and shall do so tonight regardless, but shall send it in to town tomorrow to be rigged up. I love that little clock which has been with me nightly ever since.....

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Tuesday, November 4th, 1952.
Memorandum: I write a little later than usual, having waited to catch a glimpse as to which way the wind was blowing politically before taking Underwood in hand.

So far as the Democrats are concerned, all that remains is to pick up the pieces. I suppose the most heartening thing that can be said about Mr. Stevenson is that, thanks to this election, a man of obvious stature has emerged on the scene, -- something of which the people can be proud and an individual who, by his position as leader of the opposition, may tend to inspire the Republicans to keep more to the straight and narrow path, since he undoubtedly will be a constant threat to the party going into power. I especially regret that Senator Benton, as a force for good, went down to defeat while McCarthy, representing the worst aspects of political life, has apparently been swept into office, -- something to rankle on Mr. Eisenhower's conscious for the ensuing 6 years.

What puzzles me most at the moment is how Ohio with its thumping Republican victory, failed to elect Charles Taft. I believe Washington correspondents have long voted Senator Bricker as the poorest excuse for anything in the U. S. Senate, and yet Ohio returns him regardless. I haven't heard anything about Charles Taft during the campaign but as he is supposed to represent a liberal line of political, I guess it is but logical that he should have been swept aside while a Bricker, representing everything that is stupid and reactionary should carry everything before him.

It seems to me that while Mr. Eisenhower manifestly paid too high a price for his election in tacitly flirting with the Genners and McCarthy, elements, he is nevertheless an honest man. Sooner or later he is going to have to make up his mind as to whether the Old Guard is going to be the dominant force in his administration, so far as the Executive Department is concerned, or if the more liberal elements, as represented by the Deweys and the Lodges, will hold the balance. With the Dixiecrat Senators voting with the conservative wing of

the Republican party, it is obvious the ultra conservative Senate, as personified by Taft, are in complete control of that august body. It was that element, of course, that stalemated the Truman legislative program, and I am quite sure they will do the same to any proposals that might come from Eisenhower, if, indeed, he should have in mind to recommend any legislation beneficial to segments of society outside that of entrenched wealth. The election has shown the United States still has a two party system, and in the nest of reactionary Senators may be found the seed of a situation which in 1956 will give liberalism another chance to offer a program which will probably seem desirable after another four years of Sentaorial reaction.

I heard nobody in this area express any enthusiasm over today's opportunity to cast ballots, but somewhere along the line, one postal employee must have been dreaming of vaster horizons than those represented by the mail pouches, since as has happened once or twice before, the sacks labeled for Melville, Louisiana, containing first class mail, were delivered to Melrose, and I assume Melrose sacks went to Melville, -- some post office down South Louisiana way. I reckon the switch ought to be straightened out by Wednesday or Thursday at the latest.

Tonight's weather report sounds mighty unusual, for a drizzle is predicted for Wednesday. After all these weeks of drought and forest fires, dust and smoke, a few particles of water from on high would certainly be a novel innovation.

Late this afternoon I discovered a pile of earth newly turned over in the limited space between the bay tree sprouts and the sugar pot, the bay leaves partially concealing the hole that had been dug beneath the pot. It was about big enough to permit a good sized rabbit to enter, and obviously lead to the space between the cement blocks, concealed by the eart, on which the pot is elevated. Getting down on all fours, I stuck my nose into the hole, my forehead resting against the side of the pot, and picture my surprise when I discovered that about two inches from my nose was the probosis of a pole cat who appeared just about as astonished to see me as I to encounter him. I expect he must be of the family living under Yucca and I have no desire to discourage him from remaining close by as a friendly neighbor. But as I don't want the foundations of the pot weakened, I shall on the morrow do what I can to urge him to give up the idea of setting up housekeeping on the particular site he has selected. I hope his manners are such that he doesn't feel impelled to argue the point. But now it is high time I folded up my beard and called it a day. Surely it has been an important day, and may God bless Mr. Eisenhower, little Miss Lee and Mr. Stevenson.....

Wednesday, November 5th, 1952.

Memorandum:
How nice to find your Thursday letter in today's post. There were a dozen or fifteen others, some of which, I suppose, had been to Melville, or some such place, and they all sit snugly in the armoir.

One of the dwalling secretaries showed up by just as we were beginning the first letter, -- yours, --J. H. interrupted. He had suddenly decided to head out for the Rio Grande with J. H. Williams, and wanted to tell me as to his whereabouts during the next few days, --and by the time he had withdrawn, the secretary had vanished. I am under the impression that when school begins again on next Monday, following the seasonal vacation for cotton picking, I may be able to contrive something better, -- I hope.

And then, as between this paragraph and the above, another secretary appeared out of the night. It seems somebody down the road, -- "Cousin Lug, two houses below ~~Mr.~~ Mr. Earnest's house, is having a gumbo, and you may be sure it was the anticipation of getting the "withal" to round up a plate of gumbo that impelled this late appearance about which I am not complaining since it gave me an opportunity to read your letter.

I am so sorry you haven't been feeling quite up to snuff and I do hope you are collapsing at every opportunity on the downy couch.

Your account of your flight to the Hamptons was charming and I'm so glad you have the little breathing space in the garden which sounds like a delightful situation. The secret garden idea is so pleasant, and how doubly so it must mean, for the owner, now that it is the final resting place of the companion. I used to know the

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hampton Bay area a little although I had forgotten about the sand dunes until you recalled them to mind I could gladly have joined you in having another look at them, and, if you don't mind, taking a turn in the garden, --and ultimately, sampling the sea food which I like much, --all except the fish, which I seem to prefer out of cans labeled "Tuna".

I hope the journey to and fro from town wasn't too enervating and that the temperature was pleasant. I have been following the Manhattan weather reports this past week. What with all the details that seem to cover such particulars at the world series, --both in baseball and politics and I gather that there is definitely a suggestion of late autumn in your ozone, if, indeed, the first touch of winter hasn't made itself felt.

While I think of it, I would inquire about the ribbon grass you saw at the Haptons. In this locality, it attains the height of from 8 to 15 feet but what with the mildness of the climate here and the richness of the soil, --Long Island being famous for neither, I suppose, the grass probably attains a more reasonable growth. Here its foamy whiteness begins emerging from the earth in late February or early March, and after reaching a height of five or six feet, begins introducing the green stripes along its leaves which by mid summer transpose the whiteness of Spring to an almost solid light green, and by July the big tufts or plumes, always reaching above the rest of the unadorned stalks, comes into its fulness. I may conclude this paragraph on a sour note by saying somebody left a gate open last night at Melrose and the cows entered, and as they seem to love ribbon grass, made a mare's nest out of the local gardener's garter garden. But we had better luck at Arenbourg, where ribbon grass grows with lavishness, and our several beds are flourishing mightily --and I pause to knock wood, --not a suggestion of a mare's nest to be discovered there.

At the Post Office this morning, I was greeted by an old friend, --little King, looking taller than ever, with his six foot and some odd inches belying the little adjective in his name. He threatens to honor me with a visit on the morrow, and I shall be delighted to learn the latest wrinkles along Cheasapeake Bay.

It was so thoughtful and so kind of you to transcribe, -- or should I say translate Miss Nellie's letter. Poor dear, how you must have had to labor on that one.....

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5760 D.D. 11/15/52
Lucille 10/31

Thursday, November 6th, 1952.

Memorandum:

It's summer-ish, almost like Spring without moisture, for the promised sprinkle of earlier in the week never materialized. And so I have been gardening in short sleeves, and generally disporting myself in mid summer costume.

I'm glad to learn that Helen appears improving. There was a letter from Lucille to me, giving a favorable report, and another to Carolyn, enclosed in the latter's letter to me which had been written her by Lucille. Both indicated improvement, although her "road back", I suppose, will of necessity be most leisurely. I shall of course return Lucille's letter to Carolyn to the latter. It covers about the same ground as in the one to me, except for curiosity on Lucille's part, in that she asks Carolyn if the man can be Jack Cource or some such name, living in Dallas and sending elaborate floral offerings to Helen. --orchids, five to the stem, and heaven knows what all. I never heard of Jack but I hope he is a nice egg and that the orchids mirror millions of dollars, for Helen deserves the best of friends, and if there is any romance in the business, let us hope there is lots of "mazuma" to help Helen in her finances which, being the type of person she is, will never be opulent in money, what with all her friends, her traveling and general scale of living.

Carolyn suggests that Helen is probably well enough to receive letters and thinks a note from me would be in order. I should like to write but would do so with more gusto if either Carolyn or Lucille had ever bothered to mention where Helen is being hospitalized. --and so I shall just use her old address and take a chance on someone forwarding same.

Blythe and Mrs. Clark dropped in this afternoon for half an hour. There was much talk about politics and the rigors of getting out the vote for Eisenhower. I said frankly I had just favored Stevenson and so was set straight about people being right in having voted against Truman. I suspect a flock of them did just that, as a matter of fact.

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Blythe said the radio has been announcing that I am going to speak before several different Alexandria gatherings within the immediate future. Somebody must have mixed up my schedule with some politician seeking office, for I didn't know I was going to make more than a single appearance, and confidentially, I'm not.

Blythe offered to come up on Monday morning, give a tea for me in the afternoon and a supper following the Historical Society doings with the understanding I would stay with the Rands as long as I pleased and she would bring me back to Melrose any day I selected between that Monday and the following. It was kind of her, of course, and, if accepted, would solve the Montespan potential neatly, but I have too many things cooking at Melrose, or impending letters about the Louisiana Purchase business, etc., etc., so that I had better stick to my original schedule.

I know not if I am the only white person on Melrose tonight, but assume I am. At first dark the ladies across the fence hadn't put in an appearance, so I reckon they may be lingering a little longer in South Louisiana. During their absence, their gardens are being properly saved from the drought, their animals abundantly fed and as I know of no parties on the docket at the moment, there really isn't any reason for them to hurry unless by some strange quirk, they should feel some vague and novel sensation of enjoying the prospect of being home.

I must knock off a letter to Martha G. Robinson, although I find her one of my most difficult correspondents, and I am never satisfied with what I turn out in that direction. I guess it is lucky I can't re-read such communications or I probably would be forever re-writing them. It isn't clear to me what the two sets of people have to do with the publishing problem, - at least I don't understand what the one set of people have to do with it; - I even forget their names, although it is clear enough that Charles Dufour might be the one to assimilate the material. He is too busy with his Times Picayune column to get up here at the moment and I can't imagine how anybody could tackle such a job knowing nothing about the subject matter. What part the other people, --if any, --have to play, I don't seem to know. I would favor giving Dufour a try at the thing, but should like to talk with him first, --here. Well, we'll see. I reckon this letter reveals my sleepiness, so now for a hot bath and then to get to work. Do hope you are going slow.....

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5762 Dona 10/31/52

Memorandum:

How nice to find your envelope with the extra copies of the Picayune enclosed. It is so kind of you to share these with me and I know they are going to come in mighty handy. Thank you much and thanks again.

Celeste and Madam Regard are back from their week's jaunt, and report all kinds of delights. Celeste spent a couple of nights in New Orleans with Charles and Ida. She says Charles gets up and about for a little each day, I believe. She says he and Ida mention the enjoyment he experiences in looking forward to my weekly letter from Melrose. Oddly enough this afternoon some people from Baltimore, friends of Charles and Ida, passed this way and reported they felt they knew me even though we had never met before, as Charles had frequently read them my letters to him. I guess I had better begin watching what I jot down, since I hadn't realized before the news letter was being shared. As you have had all the letters coming from the Mazurettes, you may possibly agree with me that these are not especially frequent. I don't write to them with my expectation of getting a response, --that isn't what impells me to write, and yet, off hand, as I look back over the years, it does seem to me the mails aren't overburdened with messages coming from that direction, and in part this may be explained by the fact that writing must be uphill business for poor Charles and Ida, being of the Marie Antoinette type, probably doesn't find time for such nonsense. One thing is certain, --in view of the state of shambles in which my own secretariat is at present engulfed, I certainly shouldn't spend too much time, mooning about for more in-coming mail.

Merciful heavens, --I suddenly find myself greatly in want of a gas mask, for between this sentence and the foregoing, one of my pole cat friends, apparently slap under the floor where I am situated, must have started an argument with Grndpa or Die Frau, and I am dashing at this point to open all doors and windows and turn on the larger electric fan. Misere, misere, and over and over

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Well, the aroma lingers on regardless and that means on the morrow I must wash with soap suds everything having any metal that I touch during the course of the day, for the stuff lingers on everything metallic, - lamps, typewriter, reading machine, faucets, screendoors, sissors and the thousand and one other things we never think about as being of metal until the pole cat perfume settles on it, and then, until removed by soap, transfers itself to human touch for days thereafter.

I believe it was the President of the Louisiana Bar Association who telephoned me long distance today, --from Baton Rouge, I believe it was, saying that by word of mouth he had just learned of my proposal regarding the statue for Natchitoches, expressing his enthusiasm and asking if it would be helpful in the present stage of negotiations if a personal conference, --I stagger out to get a fresh breath of air, -- let me see, to say he would be glad to come up to see me if there was anything he might be helpful about in the matter. He said several of his associates with whom he had taken up the matter were all in favor of setting their shoulder to the wheel, if there was anything I might wish them to undertake in furthering successful negotiations. I thanked him for his telephone, said I was tied up today, Saturday and Sunday but that if he or any of his associates cared to come up to Alexandria on Monday night for the meeting of the Historical Society, I should be delighted to have them present to hear me outline the situation as of up to now and that after the meeting, I would be glad to consult with them. I suspect that for some reason a segment of the legal profession, some of them possibly being civic minded, are less thrilled by the originality of the Mignon plan than by a desire to keep the fruit of such a plan from dropping into the lap of New Orleans. But whatever their respective motives, I am glad to know the matter is meeting with such wide approval, and possibly through the enthusiasm that may be generated on Monday night, sufficient public interest will be aroused so that the operators of the red tape reels may feel impelled to unwind their spools a little faster.

The clipping was handed to me today by Celeste who found it in a recent Town Talk, --this week, I believe. The people coming to hear about Sevres and Dresden will perhaps be taken a-back when the subject matter turns to something a little more monolithic.

There are scads of other things with which I should like to discuss or rather about which I should like to talk with you at this sitting, but I reckon I had better deny ~~in~~ myself the pleasure of skipping to a third page. I have quite a few letters to do and to row the college faculty and thus the week end begins. I hope yours is going to be peaceful.....

5764 Carolyn Ramsey

Sunday, November 9th, 1952.

Memorandum: I believe it was the President of the Louisiana Bar Association who telephoned me long distance today, --from Baton Rouge, I believe it was, saying that by word of mouth he had just learned of my proposal regarding the statue for Natchitoches, expressing his enthusiasm and asking if it would be helpful in the present stage of negotiations if a personal conference, --I stagger out to get a fresh breath of air, -- let me see, to say he would be glad to come up to see me if there was anything he might be helpful about in the matter. He said several of his associates with whom he had taken up the matter were all in favor of setting their shoulder to the wheel, if there was anything I might wish them to undertake in furthering successful negotiations. I thanked him for his telephone, said I was tied up today, Saturday and Sunday but that if he or any of his associates cared to come up to Alexandria on Monday night for the meeting of the Historical Society, I should be delighted to have them present to hear me outline the situation as of up to now and that after the meeting, I would be glad to consult with them. I suspect that for some reason a segment of the legal profession, some of them possibly being civic minded, are less thrilled by the originality of the Mignon plan than by a desire to keep the fruit of such a plan from dropping into the lap of New Orleans. But whatever their respective motives, I am glad to know the matter is meeting with such wide approval, and possibly through the enthusiasm that may be generated on Monday night, sufficient public interest will be aroused so that the operators of the red tape reels may feel impelled to unwind their spools a little faster.

When the Catholic clergy asks a heretic to write a history of one of their Catholic Churches, --that, I suppose, would be news. To say I am doing so is to say I am doing so. Be that as it may, it turns out that Father Callahan, after conferring with his Bishop, has petitioned me to do a book about St. Augustin's, from beginning to end. Naturally I am not going to do it, but it was nice of them to ask, --and I'm a little surprised they did. But I am not carried away by the implied expression of confidence, for in reality Father Callahan is planning to spend the summer in Europe and it would be nice when he got back and was ready for the 100th anniversary celebration of the Church in September, if the book had been neatly taken care of during his frolic abroad. Something special could be done on the subject, and especially if the Church would give me the record of Father Regis' trial, when the latter was put through his paces after he had begotten the child, Innocent Metoyer, to which the rectory servant gave birth. I believe that trial is the first or second of its kind in the history of the Catholic Church in America, and ought to make marvelous copy for the tabloids, but the Church would never release the records, naturally, and equally naturally, I shall not undertake recording the annals of the institutions. After all, the Grandpere plate just about covers all the pertinent, printable points, and I shall leave it to some industrious scholar of the Church to spread out the details in print. I can scarcely believe it myself, but for a few minutes during the morning and a few minutes during the afternoon, there were a few pin-point sprinkles, --not enough to do any good, but nevertheless promising of things to come, perhaps. And tonight the sky is without stars, and I am holding the torch there may be more sprinkles before dawn. Heaven knows we've waited long enough for it.

Usually, the narcissus greenery has attained its full height by this date, and sometimes flowers of the more forward varieties have begun unfolding. But the dry spell has kept them dormant up to now. In a day or two, following this dab of dampness, I suppose greenery will start emerging from the ground in all directions.

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As I turned this page, a tremendous t under clap seemed to unburden the clouds with its detonation, and the immediate chatter of buckets of rain on the banana leaves sounds like hail on a tin roof. Perhaps, after all these weeks, we are really headed for some water, I hope.

From the varied assortment of correspondence, I shall cast about for a couple of enclosures which may or may not be of interest. I am thinking particularly of Mrs. Moore's letter to Madam Marco. I suppose one reason why the lady writes so infrequently to anyone is because she puts off the business until she can undertake a book. I must say she usually manages to include something of interest, as, for example, in the present sample, the reference to many people in early Washington, Miss. days, which would of course delight Madam Marco. But because everyone is endowed with about the same amount of imagination, although it always manifests itself in different ways, Mrs. Moore seems to demonstrate at the close of her epistle a shocking lack of psychology in her reference to Susie's accident and the present situation in which the two sisters find themselves. It goes without saying that Madam Marco is quite capable of accepting this wail and keeping it under control, but I can well imagine that selfish Susie would find in the Moore expressions of "misere" just the proper material to provide her with self pity that would require all the bravery of spirit that Madam Marco could muster. I don't pass for being an expert on how to treat other peoples misfortunes, but I must say the Moore method in this instance seems dreadfully inept.

As I don't keep up with what goes on in the press, I suppose it often happens that things which occur to me as striking facts may well have been mentioned and disposed of years before by newspaper minds, covering so many secondary points. A case in point is demonstrated by the fact that only today did it occur to me that prominent men must of necessity avoid using their initials when approving memoranda, state papers and the like. Any document bearing Franklin Delano Roosevelt's famous "F. D. R." would forever be adequate, but he odd it would seem to have a piece of labor legislation, -- Taft-Hartley, for example, seem, were the Robert Alphonso Taft initials to be appended, -- "RAT."

The rain continues cascading and I must now roll up my sleeves and get to correspondence. Scant pilgrims today and may your day have been equally free.....

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Ida Hazlett
Martha Robinson 1/2

Monday, November 10th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter in today's post. Along with the rest of the mail, it is safely tucked away in my armoire, awaiting the morrow's reading, for no secretary showed up before I put my foot in the big road, heading Southward, and I begin this memo at a quarter past midnight, have just returned to home base, and all good secretaries, --and I hasten to confess I know of none at this bend of the river, --have long since retired.

Our Melrose caravan numbered six, --the 1 dies across the fence three Reverend Fathers from across the river and Lestan, 2nd. We left here at 6, traveled without incident, arrived in time for a half hour chat before the meeting was called to order, the President holding the meeting up a little until Dr. Rand arrived, and the latter introducing me in a rather extended but outrageously flattering oration, followed by my song and dance, after which came a buzz of personal conversation with dozens of people I knew not and some I knew, supper at a pleasant restaurant, and thence back home, and now aboard the old Underwood for a little chat with you.

As I glance backward over the past six hours, two things stand out in my mind with unusual clearness, --one on the positive side and the other on the negative.

During the interim while the meeting was being delayed for Dr. Rand, who had been detained at the hospital, I had an opportunity to chat with several people, including Blythe who had brought me the traveling clock which I had intrusted to her to have repaired last Friday. It was so good to have it back again, and she said she had taken the liberty to invited the watchmaker and his wife to the meeting, as he had expressed a desire to be present, although he wasn't a member of any organization sponsoring the business. And so I met Mr. and Mrs. Martine or Martini, --I'm not sure which, --and after I had thanked him for restoring my beloved time piece to its former perfect status, I was surprised but altogether delighted to learn that he was an old friend of Mr. Bachelier, --of all people. It seems that Mr. Martine or Martini migrated from his home, some 45 miles northwest of Paris to the vast west region of Canada at about the same time Mr. Bachelier had taken up his

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residence there, and following Mr. Bachelier's removal to Louisiana, his new acquaintance, without knowing of Mr. Bachelier's precise whereabouts, had moved to Alexandria. Several years elapse before they both discovered that actually they were neighbors, and after that, they used to visit back and forth from "little river to Alexandria and back again. I learned later from Dr. Rand that the man is considered by central Louisiana people as something of a genius in the handling of ancient and modern time pieces, and I clutched my clock a little closer in gratitude for the good luck it had experienced in falling into such capable hands.

That, of course, was on the positive side, --and right here, I should perhaps hasten to say that after consulting with Sa Majeste yesterday morning, and by our joint efforts, we were successful in establishing the fact that la Montespan who had gone to Oklahoma City on Friday, had, --fortunately, -- not returned. That was a relief, but to get on to the other factor which wasn't too stimulating. Following my appearance on the platform, and during the hour of conversation that followed, I learned both from Celeste and from Mrs. Holloman, who, incidentally took the speech down in shorthand, that the President and a Dr. Taylor who was elected the new President, had both been heard to say that they liked the speech but.....so far as each was concerned, they didn't care what the burden of my message might be, they would be content to sit there all night and just listen to anything, so long as I said it.

From this I gather they are particularly vulnerable to my brand of charm, and while that is all very pleasant, when one has exerted some energy to execute a project in a most favorable light, and one's efforts are met with success, there is something just a little disappointing in the realization that the subject matter was probably whipped up in vain, since any brand of telephone book or pages from patent medicine booklets could have been as readily been disposed of, --not on the basis of the product's merit but simply on the sing-song quality of the speaker's delivery.

But, on second thought, perhaps I should not complain about this factor too much, for what was desired was to secure a measure of cooperation on the part of Central Louisiana organizations, and in view of the vote of confidence that was carried by acclaim at the end of the speech, perhaps I shouldn't bother too much to examine the finer points as to the reasons. But the hour grows late and I reckon I had better divest myself of my "Sunday" clothes, and call it a day. I'm so glad my traveling clock will be standing sentinel along side.

5768 *Edwards China* 11/6

Tuesday, November 10th, 1952.

Mem randum:

How nice to have your elegant letter of Wednesday last past. I so much appreciate what you have to observe concerning the Tuesday election returns. As perhaps indicated by a memo or two coming to your true hand on the same subject, you will no doubt observe how closely our minds were working along the same route.

I am especially glad you mentioned the Elment Davis suggestion regarding a September rather than a July date for national conventions. This seems a sound recommendation and one that ought to be mighty helpful in conserving everybody's energies by thus limiting the time possible for campaigning. I had not heard the Davis suggestion and I am hoping it may be taken up seriously by both parties.

Seventy five million dollars is what I call a prize example of how hard headed business men can really squander money to small purpose when they set their minds to it. When one stops to think of all the clap trap and tomfoolery to which a large portion of that money was devoted, -- especially broadcasting and televising, it makes one wonder what could be done if 25 million had been allotted to that purpose and 50 million of it devoted in such a way as to give each state, say one million, for some of the projects which we so often contemplate. --what good could come, --and of a permanent nature, in contrast to the no-account speeches of second rate politicians which vanish and are forgotten in a matter of minutes after their delivery.

I wish someone would effect a new arrangement, too, for the time element in future political broadcasts. I am tinking particularly of the schedule of the major candidates. I think everyone of the radio audience this year must have been unfavorably impressed by the enormous amount of costly time wasted by the demonstrations that ate up so much of the period bought for a speech that the radio audience was denied hearing but a portion of what the candidate had to say. It seems to me this could easily be managed by introducing the candidate 15 minutes before the microphones were turned on, thus providing the noisey audiences with a quarter of an hour for wearing themselves out with applause. Whenever the applause subsided prior to the pick up by the net works, the candidate could always be provided with a preface, such as the reading of some notices of little or not

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interest to anyone, --routine plans for impending speeches or some such, and then, when the magical moment for the clearing of the air waves arrived, he would have an opportunity to make full use of the purchased time.

I hope the suggestion made a day or so ago that Mr. Stevenson may broadcast at least once a month during the next four years, may be put into effect. This would not only provide the opposition party with an opportunity to keep abreast with the ideas of a responsible opposition but, in Mr. Stevenson's case, offer a chance for the electorate to hear what a remarkable man has to say. I suspect, too, that it might go far in selling Mr. Stevenson to the electorate and thereby obviate the necessity of such an exhausting campaign four years hence. My fervent hope is that Mr. Eisenhower survives the next four years so that Vice President Slippery Slick never has an opportunity to become Mr. Big.

About two inches of rain finally became ours before Monday morning had dawned, quenching the forest fires and clearing the air of smoke and dust that had blanketed the region too long. It provided wonderful refreshment for all vegetation, too, and what with the softening of the earth, provides me with vast opportunity for digging, planting and transplanting. A heavy frost last night and a other tonight will push down the sap and make the moving of young trees and bushes wonderfully successful, I believe.

I chanced to see Madam Regard alone for a few minutes this morning. She was delighted to have the opportunity to read me what she styled as one of her most prized possessions, --your recent letter to her. I don't mind saying quite frankly that I agreed whole heartedly with her that it was as fine a letter as one could ever hope to find. I blushed a little at the somewhat extravagant references to Lestan, but Madam Regard observed that somehow those sentences expressed exactly what she had so long felt and had never express in so many words. Her admiration and affection for you is beyond measure and I must, as a more or less disinterested party, commend you on all the happiness your thoughtfulness brought to your correspondent.

On another topic, she said she wanted to tell me something, something about a character in a book which she had re-read, -- "Gone With the Wind". In that book, she said, she liked Belle Watley tremendously, but she didn't know anybody to whom she could express her enthusiasm save me, but, she added with obvious satisfaction and pleasure, she said she thought she knew somebody else to whom she felt very close who would understand her, too. And so little Miss Lee goes to the head of the class on two counts.

So much more to say but I had better restrain my impulse to jump to another page. My day has been so happy, thanks to your lovely letter.....

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5770

Wednesday, November 12th, 1952.

Memorandum:

There are no pecaness this year, as everyone concerned with that branch of the plantation has reported weekly for the past several months, and so when I saw pecaness rolling every which way around the pecane fort and the store the other day, I asked that the name of little Miss Lee be entered on the list and was told it had just been checked, as Celeste had passed that way a few minutes before.

And so if a sack hasn't already reached your true hand, one probably will shortly, and I mention this fact, thinking you might like to know what is I plied by a slip in 908, in order that you may the more readily provide yourself with some kind of a plain paper sack which you may find preferable to place the pecaness in, since the cloth one being sent bears much printing as to its place of origin.

After a heavy frost last night today's weather was bracing and sunny, giving me an opportunity to do a lot of gardening, --encumbered by no pilgrims, thank heavens, although I did take time out for a chat with little King. Knowing me to be always at home, he said he had passed this way on Monday night but never could establish contact. He is looking fine and is beginning to count the days between now and July 18th when his enlistment expires. He says he has enjoyed his work but now thinks he has had enough of it.

A call from the Millsbaugh Drug asked for another dozen Grandpere plates today. Of course I had none, but perhaps there may be a delivery from Hook H all next week, I hope. I am still surprised that Grandpere continues to roll along.

I have two or three different types of designs flying about in my mind for the Louisiana Purchase plate, but none of them seemed to have quite jelled as yet. If I can only come up with one that will be sufficiently attractive enough to sell at any

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5771

old time, I shall be glad, of course, but I think it will be easy enough to turn one out following the holiday rush that ought to be easily enough disposed of in a small quantity anyway, and if something special eventuates by way of design, then that will be gravey.

I touched on another type of plate, or rather another sort of design, based on religious grounds, in my speech the other night, and I shall jot it down for you within a few days when I am caught up a little with half a dozen little odds and ends now demanding most of my daylight 'til dark activities, what with the weather so fine and the ground so moist. The design would be based on a County or Parish unit and might do very nicely, I think, but we shall go into that at another sitting.

I am surprised to find how comparatively few letters I write when I get to spending most of my time digging. Night has a way of coming on so soon and sleep coming down so fast that I have little wakefulness either for writing or reading and while I crank up the radio when I flatten out in bed, I seem to do much more sleeping than listening.

And I never cease to marvel how people of color seem able to piddle all day and then begin genuine activities when night comes on. Bill Rocque, brother-in-law of Mitchell, the Axe, died on Monday, and along about now, --10 p.m., I suppose dozens of people are cluttering up the neighborhood for the wake. It is being held in the home which is the first one up this way from Clemence's house, and mentioning Clemence's house, did I mention that the Dark Duke now lives there, having moved across the road and down a bit from that little house hard by the spillway when we passed that way. Peter passed this way two or three hours ago to ask me if I would care to go with him to the wake, but I declined. He said he wasn't sure what he was expected to do when he got there, as he usually didn't go to mulatto wakes, and he wanted to know if he, a non-Catholic, was expected to kneel and pray before the coffin and "shake that little old weed or palm or whatsoever they calls it" that all "them Frenchmen" are forever shaking and waving over the corpse. Obviously Peter knows more about mulatto Catholic customs on such occasions, --more than I, but I assured him he wouldn't have to indulge in the hocus-pokus carryings-on if he didn't feel inclined to do so. He loved the hocus-pokus expression, obviously new to him, and so merrily headed off down the road to join in the festivities which probably will last all night, so thoroughly are such matters taken care of in this region. I need scarcely add, I expect, what must be ever so evident, that I am sleepy, and I apologize for this unusually dull note, but there's always hopes for something better on the morrow.....

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5772 Mrs. Mamoulides 11/2
Ernest Saks 11/2

Thursday, November 13th, 1952.

Memorandum:

With the soil damp, the thermometer moderate and the sky semi-cloudy, circumstances are perfect for gardening, and I have been making the most of it today, --the pilgrims cooperating by staying away.

Some Mr. Gage from Dallas sent quite an imposing package of bulbs, and I have been busy both at Arenbourg and Yucca, getting the ground prepared for their reception and their eventual planting which I completed by first dark. There are quite an assortment of King Alfred daffodils, and seeds of other varieties, including some that are said to possess white outer petals with scarlet cups, which I don't recall having seen.

I have planted all these in localities where they ought to multiply to advantage, and so, if I give them even scant attention, it shouldn't be long before we, like Mr. Wordsworth, have "a host of golden daffodils".

Whatever happened to the money I sent along for zinnia seeds, I know not, but perhaps that order will be filled a little later. After all, one doesn't plant zinnias until late March or early April, so I guess I have ample time.

J. A. tells me that the Tucker house has been pulled down but completely. The superintendent of the wrecking crew with whom arrangements had been made to handle the unique pillars, was carried off to the hospital just as the demolition work began, and so I guess we shall never realize our hope to establish the pillars down this way. How does that line of Aunt Benjamin go: --"Learn to gain without meanness, to lose without regret". Well, however it is, it is easy to preach but rather more admirable if one tries practicing such adages.

Either herewith or under separate cover, I shall send along a dab or two of mail. You will find the letter from la Mamoulides and the clipping about her of interest. Her reference to Georgia reminds me of Mrs. Moore and I must say the personal history she included gratis in her letter reminded me of Mrs. Moore, although

two such inclinations to recount personal history could scarcely permit one to assume such a custom is rather on the Georgian side of folk ways. I laughed in my beard at her opening line in which she explains that after we have exchanged two or three letters on business matters, she thinks she knows me well enough to call me by my first name. In contrast, there was the case of B. L. C. who after he and his wife had numerous grandchildren, he still continued in his diary to refer to his wife as Mrs. Wailes. Surely, after all those years of wedded bliss, B. L. C. must have known his wife a heap better than la Mamoulides knows me, --I hope.

And that lady must be in the same category as seeds of other people, including some of the Ma'am's old friends who knew the Melrose set up over a period of years, and yet had the thoughtlessness to write on occasion, inquiring "How about Christmas". It goes without saying that I shall get off a great big "NO" to Crowley forthwith.

I suppose nobody lives very long before he comes to discover that with the varying estimates of personal intentions, scads of people are want to confuse acquaintanceship with friendship, and friendship with infatuation, etc., etc., so that one who has paddled along in a most casual fashion, suddenly, to his surprise, discovers that he had better start back-tracking speedily before misleading this or that associate who has interpreted this or that gesture in quite a novel and unwarranted way.. Such has been the situation in the present instace, I surmise, and while I think the lady inquestion is perfectly alright, I am at a loss as to how she arrived at the point wherein she thinks I would welcome a lapful of mamoulides at Santa Claus time.

At supper J. H. said he had had a letter from Pat, penned in London where he expects to be stationed for two or three months. Pat seems to be impressed by the pinch in which the average London citizen finds himself and his difficulty in keeping body and soul together. I should imagine this situation must be unusually impressive on the individual who is immune to such financial worries, such as Pat, who is enjoying gravy to the tune of six or seven hundred dollars a month, a car of his own and the opportunity of purchasing gasoline at American rates and not at European levels. What a wonderful opportunity American soldiers have to play out roles of good will messengers in the various countries in which they find themselves scattered about the globe. Surely there must be a few at least who make the most of such opportunities. I hope.

Friday, November 14th, 1952.

How nice to find the Cane River reflections in this morning's post. Let me hasten to add that the package came through as flat and pretty as you mailed it. I think it is going to be so pretty when reproduced in the Natchitoches Times.

For some time, Celeste has been talking about blue roses. She saw some advertised in the Picayune a while back, and ordered three for about 6 or 7 dollars for the trio. They also came in today's post, addressed to her, and she put them on the back gallery of her house and asked me if I would help her select a proper spot for them during the afternoon. I did, but when we came to plant them, we discovered they had been carried out by Aurellia or Andy along with a stack of other trash that had been put on the back gallery, --and burned. Their skeletons were found in the trash burner. Poor Andy, I felt sorry for him and the tirade that was leveled at him. It was a rather expensive bonfire, of course, but I thought it unlikely the world would come to an end. The lady declared she would buy some more and so have to do without something else. I told her I thought that would be unnecessary and if funds reached too low and ebb, I would be glad to save her from her loss. That momentarily seemed to bring a glimpse of her ridiculousness to the fore but she was still fuming when I departed. I'll bet Andy is going to be "sick" the next time he is scheduled to do any gardening across the fence.

The ideal weather continues and digging in the earth, -- at least at Yucca and Arenbourg, continues to be a source of infinite satisfaction. Most of the green leaves of the canas have been turned to brown by the recent frosts and I always find it easier to transplant them first, and then cut their stems after re-planting, and this I have been doing with vast abandon today. A big old owl, larger than a chicken, sat in the top of one of the cottonwoods on the river bank at Arenbourg, apparently eyeing my activities. But after a while he swooped down on the nandina hedge, from which scooted a half grown rabbit, and the owl flapped off down the river, probably complaining bitterly in his beak that my presence had done him out of a fine supper. Probably the rabbit was thinking along quite different lines.

5775

I found Ed. Morrow's remarks tonight on today's meeting in Augusta between Eisenhower and Dewey much to the point, --it being more difficult to understand the interpretation of the joint statement issued afterward than the statement itself. In view of the bitter feud at Chicago and subsequently between Dewey and Taft forces, it must be considered a miracle, I suppose, that the thing was kept so well concealed during the campaign. But sooner or later, following the inauguration, I suppose, the nicety of balance cannot be maintained, and either the less reactionary forces of Dewey or the more reactionary forces of Taft are going to claim the ascendancy, --or else. With the Old Guard and the Dixiecrats well in the saddle in the Senate, I don't see how Eisenhower can buck them if he hopes to get anywhere with a legislative program, --and yet if he does end up by kow-towing to them, the Republican goose will be automatically well cooked so far as the public as a whole is concerned. The Eisenhower tight-rope-walking stunt during the campaign was an artistic triumph as well as a political one, even though it was depressing to those hoping for straight-forwardness on the part of the candidate. Besides, the role of "all things to all men", so successfully employed during the campaign, cannot possibly be used, or if used, cannot pay off any dividends worth having once the end of the campaign has been achieved, and I'm wondering when the break will come, and which wing of the party will emerge on top.

After going to bed last night, and dropping off to sleep for half an hour, I discovered, on awakening, I wanted to read a little and so ran through a few pages of "Royal Flush", which I seem to be dawdling over interminably. It is a "grown-up" novel and rather neatly turned, as regards many of the main characters, and the characters, for the most part, do not seem stifled by their costumes as do so many movies of the period, --although, come to think of it, I guess I never saw a movie depicting any event or story during the reign of the 14th Louis. Henriette d'Angleterre, as the center figure in the piece, comes off wonderfully, and I find myself wondering if she actually approached the perfection the novelist presents. If so, I must say she apparently was possessed of more sense than all the rest of the Stuarts combined.

Sombody from Magnolia reports there was a write up in the Town Talk about the Monday night doings, but no copy has as yet come to hand. I thought Mrs. Holloman might send one, but since she hasn't I'll write for one and send it along. Fair weather is promised for the week end in Louisiana. May it be the same in the Empire State.....

5776

Lucille Massey
11/12

Sunday, November 16th, 1952.

Memorandum:

A pilgrim hurly burly throughout today reflected the summer like weather that seems to have impelled everybody from Nebraska to Florida to pass this way.

I had thought I would get caught up on correspondence over the week end, and although I shall knock off a few letters tonight, I must say I shall not catch up before the middle of the week.

And speaking of correspondence, it is pleasant to have the enclosed letter from Lucille, indicating the Helen appears to be recuperating. As for Lucille herself, she seems to be as much of the squirrel in the revolving cage as people we know closer to home. How wonderful it would be if we could only tap in on some of that energy which is expended so lavishly by the socially inclined.

Last night I finished "Royal Flush" by "Aude Erwin or perhaps Irwin, and was glad I read it all the way through. She certainly caught a glimpse of the 1660's and 1670's that is unique in novels for the picture it presents of aristocratic suburban life in Ile de France at that period. Toward the end of the book there is a tendency to devote several scenes to Saint Cloud. I have never found a print of the Chateau that gave me a very clear concept of its situation in relation to the gardens, and although I have spent many a long day pulling about the terraces and gardens, it was never quite clear to me just how the Chateau faced, and which way ran the major lines. The cobble stone court yard remains and that seemingly ought to give a perfect key to the lay out of the building itself, but somehow I never did quite figure it out.

Should you ever chance across a print of the Chateau, and especially one that might give some hint as to its relations to the gardens, I trust you will make note of same. There may have been some clue to this in the print or prints in that series appearing in that book we used to explore, --"Chateaux et Maisons Royales de France" or some such, and I believe those prints are sometimes drawn on when authors are casting about for illustrations of one thing or another, and it is quite possible the Public Library, if it doesn't have this particular

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book, may well have certain pages from it in its print collection. Saint Cloud was destroyed in 1870 or 1871 and I assume there were never any photographs of the place. Marie Antoinette's secret conference with Mirabeau in the gardens of St. Cloud always seemed to indicate by contemporary references to the rendezvous that the chateau somehow gave on the tapis-vert, but I was never able to reconstruct the building to make this possible.

While I think of it, in the same collection of prints there was one, --a close up, of the courtyard of Versailles, showing it as it appeared during the reign of Louis XIV, before the two projecting pavillions into the courtyard, now dominating it had been constructed under Louis XV. If you ever should chance across this print in the volume mentioned above, I should be glad if you would notice if the Chapel appears in that close up of the courtyard, and if the roof line of the Chapel is broken by the presence of a lantern, as I believe was the original construction of the roof. Hotel Pierre's roof line somehow suggests the present appearance of the Chapel roof, but somewhere or other I gathered that a lantern dominated the roof line originally.

Well, Lord, what a lot of talk about things of no importance and, I fear, of but scant interest, and yet I hope you will forgive me for rattling along at such a great rate, being charitable if you can to all this chatter, as you are the sole soul in the world who would listen to such minor matters that, for what reason I know not, interest me so much.

I dined across the fence today and found everyone slap happy, with the indigo atmosphere cleared of all memory, apparently of the elusive blue rose bushes. Saturday was "Home Coming Day" at the college and Celeste and Dee were up and away to town early - early and weren't back by dark. Everything was just lovely, food, people, clothes, etc., etc., with only slight regret, I think, that the frolic at the college forced postponement of the usual Saturday card game at the club.

Sister appeared unexpectedly on Saturday morning, bringing a Mrs. Whittington with her. I was glad they remained but a couple of hours which was ample to cover everything that I had any desire to take up, since I had no impulse to take up anything.

I dipped into a few pages of "Immigrant's Return" by Pellegrini, or some such after finishing the Erwin item. This is a contemporary autobiography of an Italian born college professor, for 30 years a resident of Seattle, Washington. I think it is going to be interesting, --an analysis of the differences between European influences versus American on a contemporary citizen. Must fold....

5778 Walshe 11/17/52

Monday, November 17th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The thermometer is making ducks and drakes of the cannas, for while it is "hoovering" around in the 70's and 80's, the roots that were put to bed under a canopy of cotton hulls, are beginning to put up a fine stand of tender green leaves.

But in view of the crackling of static tonight, making it impossible to hear even so much as a brief weather report, I take it that the electricity is being generated by a mass of cold air that must be moving in or has stalled some place just in the offing, and probably we shall be having some showers before the morrow, --and cooler weather that may lull the growing things back to hibernation.

I did not see yesterday's Picayune but a passing pilgrim mentioned that in the Dixie-Roto Section there is a brief article on Weeks Hall and some of his color photography are reproduced in color. I asked one or two people in town to save me their copies, --if not already disposed of, and if one comes to hand, I'll send it along.

I hear much talk about dinners being given here and there at which wild game is being featured as the price resistance piece, but I'm happy to report, --and I pause to knock wood, that thus far we have escaped squirrel, wild duck and the like, --none of which do I crave too much.

Following Sunday's rain of last week, the squirrel season which had been called off, was re-opened, and lots of people seem to be having luck in bagging such game. I was rather surprised that in Bill Jones' woods, between Zeline's and Madam Aubin Rocque's the brother of the clerk encountered a deer, --a big buck, in fact, at which he shot, but, I'm glad to say, did not bring down. I knew there were deer in the Montrose hills but I had no idea they ever ventured across the cement over into this general neighborhood.

A few wild ducks were nosing around under the big oak in the front garden Sunday morning, but luck was on their side, as no Wens were about, and I suppose they eventually waddled back to the river and then continued their migration.

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The mail is of scant interest these days, and I must get to chunking the red tape boys to see what we can get untangled as between New Orleans, Washington and Paris. It seems to me I was expecting some letters from Natchitoches, but at the moment I can't think what those could have been about,-- unless it was on Natchitoches dates or some such, about which I may have inquired, and subsequently forgotten why.

I was fiddling around in the ether waves this evening when I was delighted to run up on Senator Morse in one of those "Meet the Press" things. I'm sorry I didn't hear the first of the interview, for I assume it was probably as entertaining as the balance which I did listen to with attention. When they asked him what he thought about the advisability of the Korean trip by the President-elect, he said he felt that as a Grandstand gesture it was alright but that he felt if the effort thus expended were devoted to getting a better understanding of the relations between our various Allies, and just what one was going to contribute just how much to the common problems awaiting solution, the net gains would be more satisfactory all around. I learned that Senator Morse comes up for re-election in 1956. Off hand, I should imagine that might be a lucky year for him, since by then the pendulum will probably have swung back in the opposite direction.

Immediately after that interview, I ran into somebody of the Dupont management giving a restrained but typical conservative Republican speech, in which he made the most of that deceptive old saw: "The best Government is that which governs least". Somehow it has always seemed so amazing that the ultra conservatives should lay hold on such an invitation to anarchy as a motto for their own purposes, but of course what they mean is the the best Government is that which makes everybody else behave but leaves them in their own special field to operate as they please without any restraints at all. I suppose it is thinking along such lines that impells Senator Taft today to say that it would be a shame if there should be a fight in the Republican Party over selection of floor Leader and other party officials when the new Congress takes over, --the implication being that everything will be just dandy if only they will let the Senator have all the say and nobody question him.

The enclosure is of no interest, but I send it along regardless I had better drop in a note tonight, for, if memory serves, it must be about time for her to get back to New Orleans.....

1872

5780

Tuesday, November 18th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Friday air mail in today's post. I can think of no reason why it shouldn't have come to hand on Monday, but perhaps the air plane dwaddled a little along the way. Yesterday's post was rather short and today's rather abundant, which suggests that the local delivery man out of Bayou Natchez may have been dwaddling a little, too.

I'm so glad to know all communications have been coming through on schedule, and I have of course assumed that you have been confronted with everything save peace and quiet. Don't fret over your inability to take pen in hand, knowing as you do that I understand perfectly.

This morning's cloudy skies began "dropping down in dew", along about 10 o'clock, and I suppose an inch or two of rain has fallen, off and on, until this hour of 8, when a fine mist continues, although we are promised with fair weather on the morrow. I am always surprised how many inches of water are added to the big pot by a measured inch or so. This of course is due to the wide spread at the top which seems to gather in 7 or 8 inches every time one drops from on high.

I am so glad this moisture is putting in an appearance while it is still warm, and what with the rain of a week ago Sunday, the earth is sufficiently soft to absorb it about as fast as it falls, thus providing much nourishment for the "children" and if it keeps up, an extra reserve for next Spring's needs. It had been so long since the Chinese magnolias had had any rain that some of them foolishly started putting out blossoms, but fortunately just a flower here and there, so that the Spring will not be robbed of their beauty by pre-mature autumnal doings.

In the food section, I have had a couple of breaks during this past week end in the pie department. On Friday, the clerk's wife sent me a fine pecan pie she had made, and today I received a small pumpkin pie from Senator Frederick's wife. I carved myself liberal pieces from the pecan over the week end,

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saving only a little to share with my associates on Monday.
But today we all had a full go at the pumpkin, and I
can now sit back and contemplate a chocolate cake, brought
in from Shreveport on Saturday, with supreme indifference.

Tonight's news reports speak of an anti-trust suit against
the Duponts. The thought occurs to me that probably the
faces of the Duponts are less known to the general public than
almost any other group of people in the world of business.
And that brings up the question of the relative excellence
of publicity. In the propaganda field, which surely must be
bracketed as a segment of publicity, it has long been said the
British were most successful because of all the nations in
the world, the British were somehow the most successful in
seemingly to have none. Perhaps the Duponts follow the
same pattern, paying agencies to create the impression that
they have no public relations representatives.

And tonight Senator R.A.T. is quoted as saying there
will be no cut in Federal taxes before 1954 at the earliest.
This sounds so different than it did prior to November 4th,
that I don't know it. I saw the ladies across the fence for a few moments this
morning. They were bubbling over with enthusiasm about
their visit of yesterday afternoon to the new camp somewhere
down below Monette Ferry, --perhaps 15 miles below Cloutierville,
on the former Marco or was it Markoe, property, which J. H.
owns in part along with two or three others. They saw the
lake is beautiful, the camp handsome, with much big stone
fireplaces, green leather upholstered chairs, all kinds of
electrical gadgets for the culinary section, barbecue pits,
stone steps to the water's edge and heaven knows what all. I
wonder if this could be the Lake James M. Cain was asking about
a year or so ago. Sooner or later I suppose I shall be jockeyed
into going down to see the place, but I shall resist that as
long as possible. I suspect somebody is wanting some advice
on what kind of stuff to plant around the place by way of
flowering shrubs and so on. It's wonderful how they can pour
thousands of dollars into such a thing, and for me it seems the
more striking when I consider that last summer they borrowed my
wheel barrow without asking me about it in advance, and kept it
for weeks when I need it. Thousands of dollars for such
a hermitage where gentlemen may go to shoot harmless animals and
ladies my venture to play cards, and they had to save money on
construction by borrowing my wheel barrow. "You don't have to
be, but it helps out a lot if you are....."

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5782 Carolyn card
11/7/52

Wednesday

Thursday, November 19th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The skies were all blue today after yesterday's all day rain,
and because of the earth's propensity for absorbing moisture
after all the weeks of drought, the soil was sufficiently
dry to transplant things, which I did to such end as to be
pleasantly sleepy tonight.

The clipping speaks for itself. I ran through it hurriedly
but noticed nothing especial except the placing of the report
which seems to give the impression that I spoke last. Actually
the guest speaker appeared first, followed by Dr. Taylor and
finally the Reverend Callahan.

But the clipping is rather out of date anyway, and seemingly
more so because Charles Cunningham telephoned me this morning
to say the Mayor had just received a letter from the Consul
General, requesting the Mayor to secure the approval of
the State Chairman of the Louisiana Sesquicentennial Celebration,
signifying his approval on behalf of the State in the matter
of the statue of Quatorze, as an integral part of the State's
participation in the 1953 festivities.

From this, we assume, the matter of the gift has been
acted upon favorably by France, and now it is merely a matter of
taking a few hurdles of red tape before things really begin
moving. This, of course, is heartening.

Charles asked me if I had heard anything about the
City of New Orleans putting out 40 thousand dollars for some sort
of a something or other in view of the statue of Bienville
or Iberville, --he didn't remember which, with an editorial
in some paper or other, perhaps the Picayune, indicating that
the Bienville statue for New Orleans was to be a gift of
France. I, naturally, had heard nothing of such a thing.
But we conclude that since New Orleans is to get a Bienville
item, there will be less pulling and hauling from that quarter
to secure the Louis XIV item, and so things take on a
satisfactory glint from that direction, too. It isn't clear to

either of us as to just why the approval of Chariman Richards, --or whatever his name may be, is necessary, but, then, who in the world ever understood the unwinding of red tape in matters of this nature anyway.

I learned of a somewhat hilarious bit of gossip about the mistress of Magnolia Plantation, today. For the past 10 or 15 years, Miss Sally has been drawing a hundred dollars a month insurance money because she is physically incapacitated. It is true that she has enjoyed a heart affliction all these years and of course still remains in bed most of the time.

It was therefore a bit surprising both to the people and (the people of Magnolia) and the insurance agents when the latter received an unsigned letter, stating that Miss Sally was certainly not entitled to draw incapacity dividends on her policy since she was hail and hearty and was daily riding horseback over the broad acres of her plantation, directing labor and generally disporting herself with unusual vim and vigor.

When Miss Sally's son, Mat was taken to the Alexandria hospital when he had a heart attack in September, his daughter, Betty, undertook to do what she could on the plantation in place of her father's role. Obviously some gossip person got the granddaughter mixed up with the grandmother, --hence the report to the insurance company.

I asked Madam Regard yesterday, if she had heard of the theft of the paintings, given by Louis Phillippe, to the Cathedral at Bradstown, Kentucky and she said she hadn't. They wondered if I had been dreaming such a thing, and tried to think that on awakening at some strange hour one night last week, I vaguely heard someone reporting such a news item, but now that I try to recall details, I can't seem to do so, and therefore am beginning to wonder if I had actually heard such a report or not. I thought you might have noticed such a ~~xxx~~ report in print, if, indeed, it actually happened. Madam Regard's hope was at Bradstown, I believe, before her marriage, and of course she is always interested in news from that quarter. I told her I would ask you about it, and if it had appeared in the newspapers of Manhattan, I felt quite sure you would have noticed it.

Like everybody else of my acquaintance, I seem to have a touch of the sniffles, but only a touch. I hope you have none at all but nevertheless are conserving all energies for strength in the busy weeks ahead.....

Thursday, November 20th, 1952.

Memorandum: A cloudless sky but a cool breeze has been the order of the day. What with the sniffles lingering on, I spent only a few hours during the middle of the day at gardening, and for the balance of the daylight hours, devoted myself to a flock of odds and ends and attending to pilgrims.

I think none of the enclosures are of any particular interest, although I must say I got a kick out of the one from Mrs. Holloman, passing along the recommendation of the Belgian lady that I would do better in the statue business if I took up the matter with the American Consul in Washington. Assuming the recommendation is exactly what the lady had to say, just what she had in mind I can't imagine. I never looked for a German Consul in Berlin, an English one in London or a French one in Paris, and I can't imagine what might be the address of an American one in Washington. I had always supposed that Consuls handled business in foreign trade centers, and while I realized of course that Washington is not within the limits of the 48 states, still the District of Columbia had never quite seemed like a foreign country to me. For the life of me, I can't imagine what the woman could have had in mind, and so jump at the conclusion that to begin with, she had no mind.

Celeste had a letter from the Baton Rouge Henrys today, saying the General, currently in the New York area, would not return to Louisiana until Thanksgiving night and so they were not going to make a round at Melrose for the holiday. I suppose this may mean a Christmas go-round instead. However that may be, I am glad of as few members of the family as possible, and what with the Texas ones coming this way to talk turkey, the number will be adequate to give a suggestion of holiday to next week.

It seems a little odd that neither Celeste nor I have heard from Mrs. Sterling regarding her advent at Melrose on Sunday evening, where she will remain as guest until Tuesday morning, being scheduled before this week ends, which is scheduled to be rather busy.....

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to speak at the college on Monday afternoon. Rumor has it the Governor is appointing new heads of State institutions, and I am wondering if the Audubon-Oakley curator has received the axe. There's bound to be a flurry at the last moment if the guest-speaker fails to put in an appearance, but we can worry about that when the time arrives.

With today's announcement of the filling of three cabinet posts in the impending Eisenhower administration, it seems to me an interesting coincidence that within a few days of the filing of the Democratic administration suit against Dupont for restraint of trade in its control of U.S. Rubber and General Motors that Charles E. Wilson, President of General Motors, should be named as Secretary of Defense in the forthcoming Republican administration. As one commentator a night or two ago remarked:

"It will be interesting to see, on and after January 20th, just how far the suit against Dupont by the Government will not go."

In view of all the racket that went on during the full heat of the political campaign, I am surprised the lines of an old jingle didn't occur to me, even though I have forgotten their precise wording. They ran:

"While people all around are making faces,
And all the world's a-jangle and a-jar,
I meditate on inter-stellar spaces,
And blandly smoke a big old mild cigar."

In view of the comparative quiet obtaining in the Springfield, Illinois area during these past couple of weeks, I have thought of them so often in regard to Mr. Stevenson.

Naturally, too, the same lines came back to mind when it was announced a day or two ago that Albert Einstein had declined the proffered presidency of Israel. Quite aside from his titanic mathematical knowledge, Dr. Einstein always struck me as being an exceedingly wise man. I felt this with great conviction at that time it became known he had made that arrangement with the little girl wherein he helped her with her arithmetic lessons in exchange for jelly beans, and I, for one, am glad the good doctor is going to continue meditating on inter-stellar spaces and not get tangled up in all the tempestuous scufflings of a political nature that is bound to be the lot of an Israel President.

And now I must turn to the mail, take a couple of aspirin, and then call it a day. I am determined to be rid of the sniffles before this week end, which is scheduled to be rather busy.....

5786 Rudi 11/16
Robina 11/18

Friday, November 21st, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your air mail of Tuesday, together with the clipping regarding the de Chambrun death, --news to me, --in this morning's post.

Please, please, please, don't worry your pretty head about your inability to get things down on paper. As indicated in my letter of yesterday and perhaps the day before, I realize perfectly how many unimagined things may pile up for immediate care, thereby ruling out all possibility of taking pen in hand for a time, and what with the holidays looming just ahead, I pray you not to think about writing, knowing full well as you do that I understand perfectly. After all, that is what we have mental telepathy for, --just such times as these when getting a moment to one's self is impossible. Not a cloud, not the vaguest trace of a puff of atmosphere, troubles our mutual horizon, so far as appreciating the million circumstances that get in the way of having an uninterrupted go at the typewriter, and never let any doubt cross your mind that I appreciate the circumstances and that everything vibrates in perfect harmony and shall continue to do so in the same accord until a break comes in the intricate pattern of daily doings and once more you can indulge in what I know is your immediate desire.

I am sorry I wasn't a little earlier in getting word to you that the pecanices were on their way, but I had supposed that a flock of business packages were being sent ahead of the personal ones, but I trust you were able to manage the business alright. I am hoping too that the sack wasn't slit in too many places so that like Mr. Jefferson in Paris receiving 13 from Mr. Madison in Virginia, you actually had a few when the sack itself reached your true hand.

In view of all the hurly-burly in which you currently find yourself, I marvel that you should have found time to remember the November 17th-18th anniversary. It is a curious fact that each successive year when I have gone to place fresh flowers in the Madam's room on that date, there never has been the same flower available, --and this year it was Chinese magnolia blossoms that graced her table, --

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surely an unexpected floral tribute for this particular month. But the early narcissus blossoms that sometimes are readily available, are way behind because of this year's drought, and it was the same dryness, I suppose, that impelled the Chinese magnolias to spurt into flower so unexpectedly.

I haven't seen J. H. in two or three days. He was in New Orleans sometime this week, and has been having social engagements at night which have impelled him to skip supper when he has been here.

I saw Celeste a few moments this afternoon. She said J. H. had received a letter from Pat, suggesting that J. H. hop over to London for a week or two, and that J. H. on reading the letter, decided he would head out on December 1st, or thereabouts, so that he would be back here in ample time for Christmas. To see anything of England, --and a quick hop to Paris, at this season of the year would not present Europe in its most favorable aspect for an initial view, I should think, but then the atmosphere so essential for some wouldn't matter at all to another, and that makes it easier for the latter, since any old time is as good as another. I am glad J. H. and Pat can have a look at the old places together, although I am sure it will be the roulette wheels and whizzing through the countryside in Pat's car that will probably excite the major interest.

The A. E. A. annual conclave meets in San Francisco on about February 1st, and J. H. and Celeste plan to journey out that way for the frolic. At that rate, they really ought to cover quite a lot of ground between them, for since J. H. has decided to have a look at Europe in December, Celeste has again made up her mind that she will have a go at Europe this Spring or summer, and has already procured passport blanks, etc. She tells me she thinks she will cast about to find some party or group of people who are making plans for Europe, and will go with them. Personally I can imagine no worse way to see Europe, but then if one likes a constant crowd and nothing means much except when observed in a herd, then that ought to turn out just fine.

I am glad an interruption prevented me from reading the clipping concerning de Chambrun, for that leaves me a segment of your message for the morrow.

Tonight, after I finish the mail, I expect to dip into Gertrude Stein's *Wars I Have Seen* for re-reading a couple of the chapters which I remembered from my last go-round with the book a couple of years or so ago.

I finished Angelo M. Pelegrini's *"Immigrant's Return"*, being glad that I read it. I think the author's summing up of what's out of joint in Europe, --Italy, as opposed to what is on the right track in the U. S. is exhilarating. --Thank again for your nice letter, and please always know I shall understand and sympathize with the enforced telepathetic messages until a break

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Sunday, November 23rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so we come to the beginning of a new week, and I am hoping that your week end turned out as successful as I had hoped, and rather less bogged down with unexpected people as characterized mine.

My sniffles continued on Saturday, and I thought one good way to circumvent the thing was to get lots of sleep, and I accordingly folded up my beard on Saturday night at 6 with the result that I felt ever so much better when 6 o'clock arrived this morning.

I had a couple of telephone calls on Saturday morning, one from Mrs. Coombs saying that Mrs. Woods had asked her to bring her down on Saturday afternoon. I said it would be alright, and I received them, but with scant enthusiasm. The second telephone call was from Alexandria, --from, --of all people, -- and you couldn't guess, -- La Storm.

She said she and her niece had skipped from Charleston down to Florida and thought it would be nice to head back to Charleston via Melrose. Now that is one way of making a bee line for any place but home. They were going to Briarwood for Saturday night and would come to see me today. That was fine.

And so the ladies came by this afternoon. La Storm seemed much thinner and more on the refined and svelt Edna Mae Oliver side than the more robust Marie Dressler. Her niece who had not been here before, reminded me a little of Carolyn Ramsey and seems to be a grand person. She is perhaps 40-ish and told me with disarming frankness that she had but two enthusiasms, --piloting a plane and getting bogged down in the culinary department, --certainly two unlike enthusiasms, and two that can scarcely be indulged in concurrently.

They left here between four and five, heading up the road for Briarwood where they will spend the night and then head out for Charleston which they will make before or rather by Wednesday.

Madam Storm spoke of their visit to some place 50 miles from New Haven, following their recent Williamsburgh journey. It seems

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la Storm is a descendant of the colonial Morris family and the 160h or rather 17th century colonial home at Morris Cove, Northwest of New Haven, was presented to the State of the Federal Government at the time. I gather it must be a fine place, what with the little details creeping into the description of the estate, such as the inlaid floors, and a kitch fireplace designed to accommodate 8 foot logs, and of such dimensions as to enable the haulers of logs to drive into the kitchen to deposit the firewood. I believe Robert Morris is a descendant of the same colonial family. I gather the Morris Cove property may not be in Connecticut but rather across the State line into Massachusetts.

Tonight it is sprinkling and it looks as though Mrs. Sterling isn't likely to have too pleasant a dab of weather for her visit. She arrives at 11 in town, makes a recorded interview for the radio station, and then comes here for lunch, after which we shall drive to the college where I shall make a brief introduction in the Theatre at the college. A reception will follow and after that we shall return to "elrose where she will spend the night and have a little conference with me on Tuesday morning before returning to St. Francisville. It seems to me this program should work out very nicely and will eventuate, I hope, to everyone's satisfaction.

On Saturday I chanced to be with Celeste when her mail was brought to her and she was enchanted to find a note from you which she hastened to read to me, and it did my heart good, too, for I thought it superb in its delicacy and charm, and she was deeply appreciative, and I felt like tossing several oak leaf clusters in your direction which I do, here and now.

I seemed to get a lot of odds and ends taken care of on Saturday, in spite of callers and the sniffles, including the "dressing" of Die Frau. Long chanced to pass this way, and I thought there was nothing like striking while the iron was hot, so to speak, and so I provided a razor blade while I stuffed Die Frau in a boot, and in less than half a minute everything had been disposed of with neatness and dispatch, and Die Frau was sitting on my lap again, never guessing that the boot business was more than a game.

In pursuance of my inquiry regarding the Brandstown business, I was so glad to see the matter, --with remarkable speed, it seems to me, by Life didn't do much reading this week end, but perhaps I shall get started in that direction next week or the week after. But I have found time to let my thoughts travel in your direction and I hope your Saturday and Sunday have held a few moments for relaxation and most of all the doing of nothing.....

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Mrs. Sterling's talk at Theatre College

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Monday, November 24th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The weather man's predictions for rain came to naught, and a lovely warm day was followed by tonight's equally lovely, velvety night, with the waxing moon wading through thin curtains of gauze that may or may not promise rain for the morrow.

I was enchanted at the opportunity to devote myself to gardening all morning and into the afternoon until 2:10 when I leaped through a quick shower, pulled on some Sunday clothes, and was ready to leap in a car and head out for town to introduce Mrs. Sterling.

She had met Celeste in town at 11, made arrangements at the Little Theatre at the college for the showing of the Audubon Oakley pictures, been interviewed at the radio station, and come to "elrose for dinner and a moment's rest before heading for town at 2:30.

While Celeste and Mrs. Sterling were making some last minute arrangements after reaching our destination, I had an opportunity to chat with several acquaintances who must have seen us arrive and had come out into the lobby to say howdy. I suppose I had never seen several of the ladies wearing hats before, and the effect on me was not unlike that experience we have all gone through a dozen times on shipboard when at the conclusion of a voyage after days of being accustomed to seeing fellow passengers in sea-going costumes, we are suddenly confronted by some who have become friends during the crossing, and scarcely recognizing them when, for the first time we see them in their usual urban costumes.

One maiden lady for whom I have no vast enthusiasm chanced to be the final excuse for me remarking to the group that was "hoovering" about that seeing them in afternoon hats, so many of them for the first time, I was reminded of the Marcel Proust story of the ~~thick~~ minded music professor who, when asked if his illegitimate daughter's lovely hair was similar to that of her long dead mother, declared that "I can't say, as I never saw her mother without

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a hat on". The maiden lady seemed mildly startled but the rest of the ladies took the bawdy observation in their respective strides.

The President of the Service League introduced me with some inappropriate remarks, borrowing from recent political tomfoolery by dubbing me Mr. Natchitoches Parish, and I got on with the business of introducing Mrs. Sterling. I talked plenty long enough, perhaps 4 or 5 minutes, and would have added just one more point when I sensed that a spasm of coughing might be just in the offing, and so managed to bring things to a more or less neat conclusion, and managed to end with, "and so, Ladies and Gentlemen I give you..." and then the voice started failing, so that in a most theatrical whisper, came the only important words scheduled for me to say anyway:

"Mrs. J. L. Sterling",

which came forth in a strikingly theatrical whisper which apparently the audience took to be intentional, and the applause, primarily because I had finished, but perhaps a little because of the unexpected manner of presenting the guest's speaker, -- the applause was thunderous, a 1 of which just goes to show how some unintentional and unstudied twist can sometimes turn out alright.

Mrs. Sterling's speech was delightful, with an appropriate sketch of the historical background of Oakley and of Audubon, which was followed by pictures accompanied by appropriate comments. I think every one thoroughly enjoyed the presentation, which was one in an hour or so, after which everyone retired to a reception room near the theatre, -- in the same building but down a corridor, where punch and cakes and things were served and people could gather in little knots to chat.

We were back at Melrose by first dark, supped across the fence and chatted until a little after 8, after which I came home, climbed out of my Sunday clothes, splashed through a rather hot shower, and so climbed aboard this machine for a little chat.

I believe I have several little ideas that may be of some service to Mrs. Sterling and these I shall pass along to her tomorrow morning when she passes along this way before taking off for St. Francisville.

I am glad today's weather was fair for the South Carolina ladies to make their start toward home, but I reckon they are probably less conscious of atmospheric conditions than I, for anyone who flies about as much as they can't possibly be much up-set by weather, since they are so constantly heading out regardless of the situation obtaining at the moment.

And now for a couple of letters, and thence to an early bed, and may your rest be early even as mine....

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Tuesday, November 25th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Friday "movie" letter in today's post. I like the idea of writing script for private audiences a heap better than partaking in the results of someone else's efforts that have been transformed for the screen.

There was a fairly fat mail today, -- Crowley, Atlanta and so on, but naturally I concentrated on the Manhattan cancellation first and I was glad I did so, for even though I did not finish the contents of the first letter opened, it is so pleasant having a page of conversation with you before an interruption came along, and thus have the promise of the balance of it on the morrow, while whatever else coming to hand can very well wait until later.

And may I thank you for telling me of the ribbon grass and how it appears as to height in the sandy soil of the Hamptons. And as I mention ribbon grass, I must inquire if you are also acquainted with a relative of that entity, -- the Pampas grass, which also has a feathery plume of about the same appearance, although the leaves of the plant itself -- the Pampas, -- inclines to be a more narrow, almost like green spaghetti, but rather rough in texture and to the sense of touch. I am going to plant some of both types side by side and see what happens as to growth and general luxuriance in this ultra rich soil of the river bottoms. I shall eventually report on my findings.

At the moment the local ribbon grass is in something of a shambles. Along about 7:30 this morning some heavy clouds began forming and a brief shower followed. For a moment, -- and only a moment, -- and not unlike the sudden appearance and disappearance of sound from a passing jet plane, a roar came out of the clouds, and one sudden puff of wind blew things around crazily, -- and inordinate calm tried hard on its noisier heels. The one momentary puff, however, was enough to put the ribbon grass in shreds, and the force of the blast was such that it broke off perhaps a half dozen of the banana stems along the front gallery, -- perhaps 2 or 3 feet from the ground. This is the only time I ever knew such a thing to happen, as the banana plants being 90 per cent water, tend to bend before a breeze. But today's gust was so swift,

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I suppose, that the plant didn't have time to make up its mind to bow in harmony with the pressure.

Mrs. Sterling came over while it was raining and we had a conference for half an hour and covered all outstanding points before it was time for her to take off for home.

While I think of it, I should like to mention a point that was touched upon in conversation at dinner the other day when two or three officials of the R.E.A. were dining here. Satisfaction was expressed over the appointments being made for the Cabinet of the new administration. I believe it is the Department of Interior which handles R.E.A. matters. The new appointee, --from Oregon, I believe, is expected, --having the blessing of R.A.T., --to approve the sale of the various R. E. A. organizations to private operators just as soon as the new order take over. It is my understanding that in spite of all the criticism of the Government's ineptitude in business matters, the R. E. A. organizations in spite of the fact that their rates are very reasonable, are all definitely money making concerns. I believe the Valley Electric, for example, which is the local R. E. A. unit, has not only met all its required payments but has accumulated an impressive reserve, --running well into six figures. As I understand it, if this type of service were to remain under the patronage of the Government, --as it would, had the Democrats won, the increasing profits of the organization would be turned back to the benefit of the tax payers and the rates of all users would be cut proportionately as the profits increased. But naturally those people of influence who control the operation of such an excellent business, believing in "free enterprise" and especially if the personal profit it to be realized at the expense of the users of electricity, --and so if the Government will force through a ploy of disposing of the Government owned business, the potential investors, --those, in most cases, being the ones now controlling the ploy of the organizations, will stand to make a wonderful personal advantage.

Forgive the involved sentence structure in the above paragraph. A couple of interruptions have probably successfully eradicated most of the meaning, too, but I send it along regardless, thinking you will be interested in observing during 1953 what the Taft boys put over in behalf of "liberty and free enterprise".

It's so nice having your letter tucked away in the armoire, awaiting the morrow, and thanks again for making both today and tomorrow such a happy one for me.....

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Wednesday, November 26th, 1952.

Memorandum: How nice to have the balance of our chat today, following our initial session yesterday.

It goes without saying that I was delighted to learn that you had had news direct, through special messenger, from Aunt Ella, and how nice of her to send along such a gay souvenir.

As for the unexpected appearance of the messenger delivering Aunt Ella's message, I can well imagine you might have been just as pleased, had you been advised in advance, but there's at least the advantage for you in not having been called upon to go chasing across the bay and all that such an hejira implies.

I like what you had to observe regarding the use of initials, --or the not making of use of initials by certain politicians of distinction. I had not heard of the Eisenhower monogram before. Something tells me that before we get far into the new administration, we shall be hearing many remarks concerning R.A.T. for I haven't a doubt there will be ample justification from many a quarter not in the big money to express opinions that will not be too flattering from Roberto Alphonso.

Plans move along merrily on the home front for the impending jaunt to London and Paris, which will begin Friday or Saturday of this week, I believe. As I have not kept up with details of air travel, I was interested to learn the New York to London hop is scheduled to consume but 12 hours and that passage is only \$417.00 round trip. Perhaps I am not being give the precise figures, but even so, if this figure is merely approximate, it seems wonderfully inexpensive, in view of the mileage covered and the time saved. Of course there are a flock of disadvantages to my way of thinking, too, but those are purely personal whims which wouldn't be subscribed to by the average citizen, I suppose. For example, the lurch one would feel by passing so swiftly from the American tempo to the European would make re-adjustment to the difference in civilizations and values not unlike the physical shock of passing from mid summer heat on the sun baked street into the depths of sub-Artic frost of an over chilled theatre, I should think, and while there probably wouldn't be much danger of a cultural case of pneumonia, or rather a case of cultural pneumonia,

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still, the gradual progression, afforded by travel by ship must incline one to encounter the change in human tempo considerably to the advantage of the sailor as over the flyer.

As I understand it, the ten day time limit still obtains and yet the detail that are being compressed into the plans seem to fill the schedule fairly full. For example, it is assumed that after doing England, Pat will drive his car to Paris and Mone Carlo and back so that his uncle, accompanying him, can make his New York plane in all good time. As I never tried to take in England and France, --from North to South by car, within such a time limit, I wouldn't know if it could be accomplished to anybody's satisfaction or not, but I assume it couldn't. Somehow it all reminds me of a lady I once met on a liner steaming toward New York. She was taking the boat ride for her health, and with the ship docking in New York on a Friday, she was planning to sail back to Europe on Tuesday, and told me quite frankly that during this, her initial visit to the United States, she proposed to do very little sight seeing, --simply looking over Niagara Falls, Grand Canyon (spelled bit odd) and one other place, --I have forgotten, --perhaps Seattle or San Francisco bay. As that was in the days before anybody was doing much air travel, such a program seemed quite all-embracing for a mere week end.

I am glad to report that while I continue to bark a little, my cold is fast improving, and in spite of the cool weather obtainin today, --it didn't get above 45, I felt vigorous enough to do much scattering about of cotton hulls, transplanting, and so on. The blizzard that is streaming from the Texas Panhandle Northeast to Minnesota, dumping tons of snow on the middle West seems to have passed us by, in spite of dire predictions of the Weather Bureau. We were promised a low of 26 before midnight tonight, but now, at 9:45, thanks to unexpected cloud coverage, I suppose, the thermometer has gone up to 48, and it is obvious I wasted time along about first dark when I covered the camellias, olive, etc. With their feet nice and snug in cotton hulls and such warm night gowns, the "children" must feel as snug as a bug in a rug.

According to the latest report from the Henrys, there will be none from beyond Melrose to attack the local great American bird on the morrow. We are to dine across the fence, and as the plantation is working, even as on any other Thursday, I reckon the day will unravel much as usual, although we may get a little larger assortment of foot loose pilgrims, suddenly confronted by a holiday with which they know not what to do. My thoughts will be turning in your direction so often during the day, hoping that in spite of the feasting, you may be able to grab off a few quiet moments for solitary relaxation

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Jim Nellie 11/19/52

THURS., NOV 27.

Thanksgiving Night, 1952.

Memorandum:

It has been a pleasant day hereabouts. May you be able to say as much for your own good self.

Of the oddities coming to my attention today was something Horace Hughes, a Henry family acquaintance, had to tell. He was married 33 years ago on this date, which chanced also to be Thanksgiving way back yonder, --1919, or whenever, --and, according to him, there hasn't been a Thanksgiving on this date during the interim. I suppose there would have been one, had Thanksgiving always come on the last Thursday in the month, but possibly the moving up of the holiday during some of the years of the Roosevelt regime brought about the prolonged interval of the date and holiday failing to co-incide.

As there were to be nobody for turkey dinner, it was decided we would eat next door, just the few of us, and we were bidden to be prompt at an 11:30 serving of the great bird. I picked up J. H. and Eugene at the store at 11:28, and found Dan had appeared, uninvited and unexpected. At the house we found Joe and Juanita had arrived, --invited but unexpected, as a letter in yesterday's post announced they wouldn't come. Celeste was dawdling across the river where she had gone to call on the Reverend Fathers. She arrived half an hour later, and the half hour of waiting was long. The dinner was marvelous. Period. It's wonderful how one uninvited guest can put a frost on everything else.

There wasn't much talk about Europe, although J. H. did remark that he is leaving Tuesday, --but whether that means leaving Melrose or Manhattan, I know not.

Celeste is talking quite a bit about her European jaunt, which she hopes to effect, starting the fourth week in June, and returning early in August. She expects to fly over but ship back. Some how I have a feeling she will never go but I hope I am wrong, for she is looking forward to it with a measure of enthusiasm.

As I think of her in Europe, the more it bears down upon my mind that mighty few of us have any notion what impells other people to do things.

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I can't think of a thing Europe has to offer her that she wouldn't get much more of in some place like New Orleans or New York but inasmuch as I am so ignorant about what the impulses are that take the vast majority of people anywhere, I am quite in the dark as to what she hopes to discover that will make the trip worth while. It seems to me that I remember vaguely of one American girl who yearned for Venice, or having achieved Venice, was in transports of delight because of the jazz band discovered there. Well, Europe had better have a flock of jazz bands this summer.

The latest wrinkle on the home front is a telephone connection for Yucca. Celeste "just knew" I would be entranced, and she requested its installation on two grounds, --first, it would be so convenient if she ever had friends passing this way who wanted to see me or to make a tour, --and secondly, --and it seems odd this should be secondly, if on grounds that being so often alone with Madam Regard, it would be so nice to know that any time of night she could establish contact with me by wire. J. H. naturally acceded to her request immediately. The phone will be installed within the next day or two, it is understood. There will be some nuisance attached to the thing, since both her phone and mine will ring on all incoming calls. But there will be the advantage to me in being able to make out-going calls direct from my desk. I know not if the convenience will balance the nuisance but I think it is prudent, in view of the situation obtaining next door, that a connection be established. It goes without saying that I shall pass along the number immediately when it comes to hand.

There were the usual holiday pilgrims, and for the most part pretty dull. Some Mobile people, who looked civilized, were the most difficult, for I could get no re-action from them whatsoever.

Miss Sally's granddaughter, Mary Gunn, was home from L. S. U. and brought up some of her college friends for a go-round. We had a pleasant chat and one of the Reverend Fathers brought over some important industrialists or some such from North Louisiana or some where. They were alright, but on such a pilgrimage, the tycoons were as disappointing in appearance as a fish out of water. Perhaps I should look to Venice and install a jazz band.

The plantation labored as usual, with no thought of a holiday. I received a message from both secretaries, --one having gone to Winfield, --of all places, for the balance of the week, and the other having gone to Montrose to haul wood for the family fireplace. I shall perhaps catch up with the latter on the morrow. I do have correspondence to explore. But after all, today is Thanksgiving, and since none of the mail is of importance, I hope, it can wait. I hope you had a nice, nice day.....

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Natchitoches -- 8043 (eight naught four three)

Natch. also League 11/25
Robina 11/25

dream

Friday, November 28th, 1952.
Memorandum:

As you have already surmised from the notation above, the telephone has been installed. It is a party line but is comparatively secure, for although everyone on the party line can listen in, there is a pretty good chance that nobody will, and, of course, out-going calls may be made without the tingle of the bell sounding on any of the other outlets which include the house across the fence, the garage and so on.

I got around to do a little mail today, and shall send along a few enclosures, although I believe there is nothing of any interest.

We were promised fair weather but it was cloudy all day and along about first dark it began sleeting a little, but it melted on touching the ground so it really doesn't count for much.

I have found myself so often today thking of the Tilloah request and wondering how you handled it. Knowing how things are, it would seem as though he would have simply asked a public stenographer to take down his dictation, or would that be against Himalya's idea of good business. Be that as it may, I am hoping you may find some way to side-step the whole thing. Isn't it odd how I never hesitate about imposing upon your good nature, but paradoxically enough, I seem to resent such efforts when they stem from another particular quarter. You find in any of the correspondence being enclosed, the letter from la Mamoulides, I am wondering if you will be as struck as was I by the seeming past tense in which she refers to me, some what after the manner as though I were dead. I think it is along in the 2nd or 3 paragraph where she is speaking about the Picayune article. It gave me quite a kick.

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I so seldom dream and so rarely in color that having done so last night, I must remark upon it. It began in a beautiful big white room, lined with panels of white that opened readily, each containing marvelous 17th and 18th century treasures, --folios, books, ivory, glassware and china, and china. Where we had been prior to our arrival and with whom we had talked didn't seem to register but it was perfectly clear that we had been told we might select whatever we pleased from the collection before it was disposed of, --to what organization I know not. We had so much pleasure hurrying through the vast collection, and among other things you selected was a pair of porcelain vases, rather like water glasses in shape, but much larger. The background was Wedgewood blue and the figures, beautifully executed after the manner of David, were in white a pale gray. It was obviously a garden party in some lovely private garden or park, and the trees were especially happy in their background of gray, as between the figures and robe in white and the blue of the background. There was a sumptuous padded leather folio bearing the arms of France and Navarre, bearing the unmistakable "L" in the corners, all embossed in gold, with the inside of the folio-lined in white taffeta. We thought that would be nice, too. Then there was an ivory colored vase or fruit dish, a fluted shell, balanced on a single standard also ivory in color, the whole thing looking like something Cellini might have stirred up, had he created his stuff in the 18th instead of the 15th century. Grandpa, knocking on the screendoor for an early snack dispelled the dream but it had been so vivid that I can still see many of the lovely treasures and experience the pleasure we knew in making our selections. I suppose all this must have had its origin in your reference to having read the Bertrand pages recently, plus a flock of other pleasant odds and ends that somehow have a way of piecing themselves together when dreams really get to going.

Today's somewhat gloomy weather must have discouraged the road runner, although, frankly, I didn't know that was possible. Joe Henry, I believe must have spent the day resting in bed, for I saw him only at food time, and I believe Juanita and Celeste must have gone card playing in town for things seem quiet over yonder and Juanita didn't put in an appearance for supper. Just so long as everyone is doing what he pleases,.....

1082

Reel 11/3

5800

Sunday, November 30th, 1952.
How nice to find your fat, fat envelope in Saturday's post. I am entranced to have the ample number of envelopes containing the seed of so many potential zinnia plants. I find it especially remarkable that you should have found the white plant seeds, for in spite of many inquiries I have made, nothing on the white have or has come to hand as yet, and so again, as so often in the past, you have come through where all others have failed to make so much as a peep. I am saving the white ones for the base of the sun dial and I can already envision them as being mighty pretty, thus centered in the midst of the green lawn of the white garden.

And how kind of you to have transcribed Miss Nellie's letter for me. Generally her letters arrive at such a time as to make it convenient for the good Doctor to help me with them. In the event that there is some slip-up in the schedule, so far as he is concerned, I shall make a notation on Miss Nellie's letters, indicating that I have not read them as yet. In case no notation is attached, you will know that I have read them, and you may dispose of them in any way you see fit.

And how magical are those fingers which could bring forth the clipping about the Bardstown theft of the paintings. I marvel and marvel and marvel at your resourcefulness. As I dined across the fence today, I took the clipping with me so that I could run through it with Madam Regard, --one of your most enthusiastic admirers, and like me, she expressed her astonishment that you could thus pull forth such an unexpected item so readily and with such deftness. I am returning the same herewith, and thank you no end for your kindness both to Madam R. and to me.

I was so glad to have the additional particulars regarding the 'illoah business and I trust that everything incidental to that matter is now finished, --and that there may be no others like it.

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This week end has been dirzzly and cold, with the result that road runners were kept to a minimum. I can't say that I made much of the free time thus afforded me except that I did do a heap of sticking close to the fire, reading some and generally dispelling the sniffles which are definitely on the way out, but withal slow in their withdrawal.

There is a usual hurly-burly of advice and recommendations to the traveler who takes off on the morrow for the European jaunt. Oddly enough, there is the usual unexpected squabble that somehow has a way of coming to the surface at such times,-- invariably, I believe, in so far as I can remember. The husband put a question to the wife as to what was desired by way of a gift, the questioner explaining that inasmuch as he had the intention of doing something of the sort, the choice ought just as well be guided by the desire of the recipient. It was at that point that the unexpected happened, for that afforded the prospective recipient an opportunity to explain to us three that "as we are poor" and must therefore conserve every penny, much care should be given to obtaining the most advantageous silver tray to be found in as much as when she heads out in the same direction in June, she will have no time for other shopping than on smaller things, - handkerchiefs, etc., "since we are poor and must avoid spending anything beyond bare necessity". I find such statements not only puzzling but hilarious, and I am wondering if the person saying such things really believes them, is trying to convince others or herself, and if she doesn't recognize how utterly stupid they must sound in the face of actualities. If Neptune tooted on his sea shell, admonishing the mermaids to conserve every drop of water, I should not find the advice more ridiculous.

What seems so deplorable to me, however, is all the talk about a potential or prospective gift, for somehow, if I had to go through such a business on such a point, I never could look with any pleasure on the thing when it finally came to hand, since the racket about it in advance would have put such a ~~xxx~~ tarnish on it in my own estimation that it would never afford me the slightest pleasure. But, then, fortunately, not all people react the same way to any set of circumstances, and perhaps, for all I know, the thing will be the more treasured in the end because there has been so much pulling and hauling before the project really got under way. There was some other point or other I wanted to touch on, but I shall have to let that slide for another sitting. Again my thanks for your elegant letter and hence a happy week end....

8082

5802 Robina "lv9
Mrs. Henry "lv9

Monday, December 1st, 1952.

Memorandum:

Misty and dour all day and continuing into the night. But I welcome the excuse to dilly-dally at desk work of which I have much, and having cleared some of it away, I shall attack the soil on the morrow with added vigor.

The incoming mail was scant but the fat envelope from the Library of Congress did come through, and I shall post it to you with the request that you give it a glance only if you happen to feel like it, for it doesn't seem to matter much whether it is mailed or not, since there is never any acknowledgment of it from Washington. In the event you think of anything that should be added, --old or new, you will feel quite free to do so.

There seems to be quite a flurry and a flutter on the social side, what with a dance for the young people, --note the adjective, at the Country Club on Friday night, and much entertaining to be done on Saturday when floats will parade through the street of Hatchitoches in the afternoon and fire works will explode along the river bank at first dark. I may have mentioned that space in the hotel has been reserved, --the windows giving on the river for the entertainment of guests for that occasion. It's really wonderful how "us poor folks" do get along.

There was a telephone from Millsbaugh Drug today, pleading for some Grandpere plates. They have been out of stock for ever so long and Saturday's frolic on Front Street is calculated to bring forth the season's biggest demand for this item. But nothing further has been heard from Rock Hall on the subject, and while the letter of two or three weeks ago led one to assume they might be here by now, I reckon that was merely a sedative and we shall probably hear nothing further regarding the shipment until after the holidays have come and gone. It's nice to know there is a demand, even though we can't do anything about satisfying it.

I tried listening to the radio last night but there was much static and I could find nothing that interested me sufficiently to try to wade through the crackling and snapping of the electrical interference. The effort seemed too much, even for "Meet the Press" which I usually enjoy, but when one catches but about every third word, the scramble doesn't seem to make much of a worth-while omelette. And speaking of "Meet the Press" wouldn't you love to know how it is or what the set-up or pull may be that places Martha Roundtree in the broadcast as Moderator. I have no idea as to the identity of Miss Roundtree but assume she must be some kin to an important stock holder or some such, since her personality was certainly never such as to recommend it for radio work. However, in view of the minor role she plays, the program is usually worth listening to in spite of her uninspiring radio personality.

And so with the radio rejected, I took Gertrude Stein under my wing when folding up, and discovered I could keep awake for quite a few pages of her "Wars I have Seen". I don't recall having ever read such an excellent account of the day to day sensations that are the experience of the average citizen when the peace of war has passed and the civil population and the occupying forces begin to realize that the jig is about up. So show what she had to say kept reminding me of the title of one of little Marcel's volumes, --"La Prisonniere", wherein one is given to understand that neither party, --the prisoner or the warden can be quite sure which one is the prisoner and which the guardian. And to add a couple of typical Stein adverbs, --one doesn't really know, not really, that is to say no one and anybody really doesn't know, doesn't really know, not anybody not one, not even anybody. Miss Stein, in short, is a sight.

I was interested tonight in learning that the Eisenhower Cabinet is now complete, although I must say I am very much in the dark as to the identity of many of the officials thus far named in first and second rank jobs. The new Secretary of Commerce is described as a multi-millionaire, which comes as no surprise. There seem to be so many "well heeled" individuals in the new set-up. That Mr. Aldrich of the Chase National Bank should have been named Ambassador to England left me cold, as I seem to know nothing of that gentleman, although vaguely it seems to me I recall that Mrs. John D. Rockefeller was a Aldrich, signifying, I suppose, that Mr. Aldrich must also be among "us poor folks".

But now for a bit of Stein and thence to fold.....

Memorandum:

Another day of "dews and damps", and although the weather bureau promised clearing skies and warmer weather, the mists continue and the thermometer remains around 40.

The master, leaving this afternoon by plane, was scheduled to stop off at the Baton Rouge air port for a conference with his brother, and thence on to New Orleans and so to Manhattan with his flight for London scheduled for Thursday noon. Oddly enough there was a vast to-do just before he left here. Celeste was scheduled to drive him to Alexandria to catch the plane. He was delayed by a few details at the office, whereupon the lady put her foot down and refused to drive him because he was a few minutes late. Then he went on a sit down strike and refused to do anything other than cancel his whole trip. That brought a slight but very slight modification of the attitude of the neglected wife, and so off they started, with everything in a perfect jangle. What a business.

I did a little reading last night but I haven't anything of any special interest at the moment and so I discover my head starts nodding soon enough when the subject matter isn't too entrancing. At the moment I am turning through a few pages of "Mr. Lincoln and His Generals" by Harry Williams, --a History professor, I believe, of L. S. U. The book seems to be alright, and the reason for its having been written is, according to the Preface, that nobody has ever evaluated the considerable contribution -- the inauguration, in fact, of the present concept of the role the Commander in Chief of U. S. forces plays in modern warfare. Apparently Mr. Williams thinks Mr. Lincoln did quite a remarkable job in the strategy he planned and eventually got executed, although the Generals he had to execute his plans during the first three years of the war were mighty poor. I don't know much about such business but it is always interesting to get a new slant on this or that personality that figured in the scuffle of the 1860's, and I am running through this volume to see if I can

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catch a few side glances at old Banks who, along with Ben Butler, was one or the two were of those "political Generals", many of whom Lincoln found it wise to appoint to high office in order to solidify certain political factions in the North to gain the proper political support for prosecuting the war which, after its beginning, must have been lacking in enthusiasm in many Northern quarters.

The Lowell Thomas and Ed. Morrow reports of the comments by Senator R.A.T. regarding the Eisenhower appointment for the Labor Department suggests that Mr. Taft didn't have much success in influencing Mr. Eisenhower on his Cabinet appointments. I am glad to hear this, and not so much because of my dislike of the Taft concept of Government as for the slight clearing of the atmosphere which it seems to promise. Up to now, I have found myself uncertain as to which faction has been exerting the main political influence on the General. Somehow my regard for the General has slumped in proportion to my impression that he had not been making the decisions but rather was accepting the decisions of others, --and all the time I haven't known whether it was the Taft or the Dewey advice that was being followed. What with the Taft statement of today, one can but conclude that the Senator is unhappy about the way things are going in the matter of appointments, and therefore one happily concludes that even though the General may not be making the decisions himself, these decisions, at least, aren't being made by the Senator, --a feeling that is certainly re-assuring.

It is apparently the consensus of opinion that Mr. Taft can wreck all proposed Eisenhower legislation if he feels so inclined. He may be able to wreck the Republican Party thereby, too. I take it that at the moment, Mr. Eisenhower must be in Korea, --or on his way there or on his way back. But Korea will undoubtedly seem incidental to him in view of the headaches that are brewing for the Executive on and after the 20th of January. I can't feel too sorry for the politicians but I must say, without knowing anything about the domestic set-up in the Taft household, I do wonder how they are making it during these days when the Senator must be ripping. I'll be they are all hearing many a "Carrrrrumba" and all that sort of thing these days.

As for myself, I can't help secretly laughing at the Ohio autocrat, for such strong-willed people as he typifies must be ten times more frugal that they can't have their own sweet way than those who by nature or inclination have long ago learned to accept the imponderables with a lot less fury and a little more grace. It would appear it isn't going to be a merry Christmas for Robert Alphonso, --and I say to Hell with him...just like that.....

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Wednesday, December 3rd, 1952.

Memorandum:

As you have already noticed, -- a new ribbon, thanks to "Little Miss Deceasey". No, it is not a new ribbon, it is a new ribbon. There doesn't seem to be much different to report so far as local doings are concerned. The weather remains cloudy and misty, with a cold mass somewhere to the North, and warm air blowing in gently from the Gulf, making for cloudiness and moderate thermometer readings.

Along about this time of year, one is likely to bump into some story or other that lends itself for the Christmas season. I haven't encountered a real one thus far this season, but I heard the makings of one today. I chanced to be at Celeste's this morning when she was reading a letter just come to hand from Betty Regard of New Iberia. Celeste, some time back, had told me about a boy down yonder whom she had met and liked. He was making a home for his mother, as the father had more or less snubbed his son and his former wife for a mistress and her, --and I suppose, his children. The son, Preston, or some such name, had not spoken with his father for 13 years. Preston has a boy friend who is studying in Paris. For ever so long, Preston has been trying to save money in order to go to visit his friend for two or three weeks. By dint of much pinching, he rounded up enough to fly over for this month of December. Betty Regard prevailed upon the youth to go and speak to his father before he left. The youth, although not easily persuaded, finally did so last Monday. After having left his father, the boy reported he seemed deeply appreciative of his son's call. On Tuesday morning the father called at the home of his former wife and son, and in view of the boy's impending vacation to Paris, handed him one thousand, eight hundred dollars.

This isn't precisely a Christmas story, but in so far as it goes, it certainly seems to be a step in the right direction, and whoever wants to figure out such matters can decide for himself whether the Christmas season will be happier for the father or the son. I like to think it will be equally happy for them both.

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Although I did not chance to assist at the doings,
~~although I did not chance to assist at the doings,~~
it is my understanding there was quite a flurry today when Celeste, in writing to one of her friends, inviting her to be her guest at the hotel on Saturday night for the fireworks, telephoned the hotel to determine the room number assigned to her, only to discover that there was no record of any reservation having been made. As she herself had spoken with the owner of the hotel regarding the reservation some weeks back, the resulting rumpus could accordingly be confined to just two people, but I expect an indigo atmosphere spread far and wide in the ensuing scuffle. I am certainly glad that was so, as one set-to I didn't happen to get in on. "Peace on earth" would not have been one of the elements in such a hurly-burly, I suppose, and how the pre-holiday reservations matter was finally adjusted, I know not, but shall probably hear all before another day has played out.

In the postal department, the pre-holiday lull seems to have started in the 1st class section. I expect everyone is beginning to gear up his loins to have a go at shopping and that before the big on-slaught of Christmas cards and parcel post, the 2nd class section of advertising material is the major matter with which the clerks are confronted.

In the ranks of those receiving Welfare checks, there is also much distress these days, what with a new edict having been brought out, stipulating that families on Welfare should not receive checks if they are possessed of automobiles. I expect I could enumerate about a dozen such people just on Melrose who are effected by this decree, but the interesting thing about the reaction is not so much the distress of those possessed of pleasure cars but the resourceful fashion in which all I know set themselves to trying to discover some way to circumvent the ukase. I have been asked by several to get down notes at their dictation to relatives and friends,-- often as far afield as Arizona, praying them to sign some sort of a statement, declaring that such and such automobile, at present in the custody of this person or that, in reality is their car,--the signer of the statement, and therefore the presence of the car in the family garage of the Welfare client should in no way effect the status of the individual receiving monthly checks.

As a firm believer in the Welfare program, I am all opposed to the chicanery that obtains in so many families who get along very nicely on the income of their own industry and who devote the Welfare checks that come to them almost exclusively to the maintenance of automobiles. I believe it was Warren Harding who said that Government is really a very simple thing, and I suppose he would have said the same about honest administration of Welfare.....

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5808

Thursday, December 4th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Mist and rain and rain and mist until sundown when the skies clear. And now, at the hour of 9, a slightly moth-eaten moon is staggering up over the Eastern horizon, and if there is a like break for the town's folk on Saturday, their festivities ought to go off wonderfully.

The recent dabs of moisture have finally filled the sugar cauldron,--but completely. I haven't bothered to remove the grandkifloria leaves which probably made quite a substantial contribution to the trash in the bottom of the pot, although I haven't stirred up the thing to see what is what. But whatever it may be, so far as cause is concerned, I know not, but it is wonderfully evident that whatever the ingredients may be, they have produced a blackness in the water which reminds me at once of that shiney blackness that characterize certain types of black glassy looking counters in drug stores,--or,--of all things by way of contrast but identity of color,--the placid surface of certain pools in the Magnolia Gardens on the Ashley River. If only a long legged heron, swift and snowy, would come and stand on one leg in the expansive pot, the effect in contrasts would be splendid.

Today's mail was thin and there was no pilgrimage business, what with all the dampness abroad. As for the ladies across the fence, I saw only Madam Regard, as Celeste went to town early this morning and had not returned by first dark tonight. I think Madam Regard relishes it when she can find herself quite alone for a whole day. For one thing, she probably indulges in the rare satisfaction of "busting" her diet, and as she finds no pleasure in being restrained in food matters, I certainly hope she goes on a sugar and cream bender, both of which are forbidden, I believe, and both of which she misses mightily when watchful eyes are about to supervise. After all, at 84, she might as well follow her own inclinations I think. Wasn't it in "Old English" that George Arliss played the role of the man on the diet who threw care to the winds, consumed a banquet of everything forbidden him, and had the supreme satisfaction of dying at dessert. It always seemed to me

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there was a lot to be said in favor of that.

Beau Mack came to cut my hair today, and it was pleasant to have him perform his tonsorial stunts on me, seated as I was on the gallery with the daylight dimmed by the mists and the banana leaves dripping mightily, --everything so far removed from the perfection of mechanical contrivances that dominate such places as Terminal barber shops. Beau had been to Shreveport on Sunday to see Y. C. who is getting along nicely, and to call on his brother, --Beau's brother, whom he described as "looking like a varmit". His brother was gassed in 1918, and except where the hair was protected by his helmet, everything else was singed off and never grew back, --eye-lashes, eye-brows and whiskers, so that the man has never since had to shave. Beau says the man's lower eye lids tend to sag, revealing a curious line like bleached leather, and in view of these several afflictions, no wonder the man puts him in mind of a "varmit".

I have always been fascinated by what the local negro has in mind when he says he has seen a "varmit", for almost anything, real or imagined that tends to skulk about in a triangle of briars seems to be a "varmit" and to these things he often attaches all kinds of imagined oddities, I think, so the thing ends up by being something of a gremlin or some such pixie. Not long ago I heard two youths discussing what they had encountered in a big patch of will rose bushes, one declaring the thing to have been a "varmit" the other with equal vigor maintaining it was a "wah-hoo". As nobody has ever yet been able to set me straight as to just what a "wah-hoo" might look like, I'm still pretty much in the dark as to what Beau's brother may look like, but anybody's imagination is probably adequate to conceive a rough idea, -- and be right about it.

I had another little round last night with "Mr. Lincoln and His Generals" and found the going pretty smooth. But in view of the hopeless muddle that characterized everything in the Union military set up during 1861 and 182, I cannot but assume the Union cause would most certainly have been lost had it probably not been for the fact that Jefferson Davis was bundling things just as badly on the Confederate side, although the present volume has nothing to say on that score.

And now I must roll up my sleeves and get to work, for I had better clear the decks in anticipation of many a visitor whose advent will probably make itself along about tomorrow.....

5810

Friday, December 4th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Monday letter in today's post.

How identical with little Miss Lee's pattern that she should have so quickly discovered particulars particulars about the Missis home and sent them along. I am so glad to have this information and will find it pleasant to make use of it when penning my next epistle to Monek's Corner.

It goes without saying that I was pressed no end by the message that upset plans for the week end. It was unfortunate that interruptions were frequent today when secretaries were about.....

And here a slight interruption transpired. Mrs. Coombs telephoned to inquire how the new telephone was functioning. She found out almost immediately what with many clicks of a receiver going on and off the hook. And then a familiar voice, from over the fence, broke in to apologize and to say the Dark Duke was at her house reporting that his baby was terribly sick, and asking her to telephone the lady doctor. As there was nothing of consequence in the original telephone call, and as urgency naturally out to take precedence over chit-chat, everyone was glad to co-operate. One thing, of course, that this unexpected factor introduced was the fact that obviously the Dark Duke doesn't know about the telephone -- 7 -- 8043.

And now to get back where we were when the last customer came in, --it isn't quite sure in my mind if the invitation, mentioned in your letter, covered one individual or two. I assume it was the latter but not being certain I thought I would inquire. Perhaps it doesn't matter either way, but in case the matter concerned such a single digit, it might promise interesting after-maths. It goes without saying, of course, that I shall be all ears as to how the stew cooks and if there is much chance of its coming to a boil. Again it is just another of those examples, the greatest care in avoiding reference to what actually obtains on the hearthstone, I cannot resist expressing my complete admiration for the magnificent way in which, in spite of all, little Miss Lee has kept all flags flying.

0182

5811

Friday, December 4th, 1952

As I turned this page, the telephone rang. It was Dr. Coombs. He said he had heard from some source in South Louisiana that I had some sort of an extraordinary persimmon, --which is certainly going around Robin Hood's barn to get particulars so close to home, and as he has a native persimmon in his garden, he wondered if there was any chance to getting a shoot to graft on to his tree. My guess is that the chance is good but the season is premature, and so I must remember along in March and see if we can get one of those huge numbers established a little nearer to town. I am always so happy when someone wants to cultivate this sort of thing, and especially when they are rare, for thus the chance of their disappearance is lessened, even as in the case of butterfly lilies being scattered across Adams County and throughout the Natchez country....

I had in mind to talk a bit about the Lantern, as referred to in your letter, but what with the several interruptions, --another one intervenes as between this paragraph and the foregoing, and I cannot recall if I have touched on the matter or not. The latest call was an invitation to a party and to supper following tomorrow night's fireworks in town. Naturally I declined with thanks. The usual contest ensued, first on the ground that I am trying to be noble about staying at home since nobody in his right mind would prefer that, and then, that approach getting no where, there is the other inevitable, --that I owe it to my friends, even though joining such groups affords me no pleasure. That line always irritates me and it doesn't take so long to terminate conversation after that. Well, now really, another call, --this time from some man who handles publicity for the State Welfare Board or some such, asking if I could give him an interview with a view to passing along particulars regarding color in the Cane River country. Well, after all, I must say the telephone is a wonderful invention and perhaps the nicest thing about it is the fact that one can deftly lift off the receiver and let the busy signals dominate the switch board indefinitely.

I believe one or more Regard nephews came from New Iberia this afternoon, and some young ladies from some place or other, all with a view of attending a private dance given at the Country Club to which, I suppose, the gentry have wended their way. So runs out the week, and may the week end hold cornucopias of peace for little Miss Lee....

0182

5812

Sunday, December 7th, 1952.

Memorandum: This morning Dr. Kyster of the college came to see me. He wants me to appear before the Chamber of Commerce at a dinner in town, giving the town fathers an account of the business in question. I told him I was just that sleepy, and yet I cannot resist the impulse for a little chat before taking a catnap.

It has been among the more pleasant week ends that I can remember, --marvelous, cloudless weather and mighty few pilgrims, excellent food and just a few nice people to chat with.

I know not if, without trying, I successfully eluded Saturday pilgrims or if there just weren't many. I had expected several people would stop off this way, --coming from the South, on their way to the Saturday night frolic in town but I saw but few and those I side stepped, for it was about 5 when Dr. Rand came to see me and to carry me off to the camp to dine with him and Blythe and some of the children, and although I thought I detected a few people scuffling around in the general direction of the big oak, I simply kept moseying along and it was dark before I was back home again, and everybody resident on Melrose or visitors were in town getting ready to observe the fireworks.

Dr. Rand seemed in fine spirits. We talked politics quite a bit, --all on his side, and he was so pleased with the results of the election, it was a pleasure to encourage him to voice his enthusiasms.

Blythe, although not depressed, wasn't exuberant because her Mother's conditions gradually declines. Dr. Rand had told me earlier that it is a matter of time. She doesn't get out of bed any more and I think Blythe is effected in two ways, --for not only is it natural that she should feel depressed about her Mother's health, but also I think she is restive because for the first time in her life, her activities are definitely restrained, since she must spend several hours of each day at her Mother's home, and for one who has been accustomed to fly about the country as free as a bird on the wing, this restraint

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must be as irksome as hobbles.

This morning Dr. Kyser of the college came to see me. He wants me to appear before the Chamber of Commerce at a dinner in town, giving the town fathers an account of the Quatorze business and outlining what I want them to do in pushing the business in question. I told him I would be glad to do so and he will advise me when the dinner will be held. One thing I like about the South is the time people take to have entertainments or dinners or suppers on the slightest excuse, and while I'm in favor of the custom I applaud it most vigorously when I don't have to participate. But in the present instance, I think I can make an exception if my presence will lend any enthusiasm to the project. Parenthetically, too, I am glad to enlist some of the officials in the business to set them actively to work in order that I may find it the easier to bow myself out at the earliest opportunity when some of them who are eager to be up in front are ready to take over.

May Balthazar, of all people, appeared at the front gate just as I had left Celeste's where I had dined with her and her guests and the Reverend Fathers. May explained that she had tried telephoning me without success, asking that or to ask if two of her kin folk from Port Arthur might walk about the gardens. They were at the gate and I gave them a tour, and got more out of it than they did, for they were pleasant people and I could learn a lot about color in Port Arthur while they were grabbing off particulars about ye olde plantation. The woman in the party was quite remarkable in that she recognized all the plants and casually referred to them in both their popular and botanical names, --all except the box or yew, which she had never see before.

I had intended listening to several programs tonight, but somehow I got interested in "Speaking of Man" by Abraham Mayerson, or some such, --and was so attracted by what the psychiatrist had to say in poking fun at his profession, that the first thing I knew I was awakening after having been nodding for quite a while, --the disk revolving along merrily, and the radio time having run out so far as programs of interest were concerned.

But now that we have had a little chat and I feel sleepy still, it will be a pleasure to fold up my beard and lapse off again into dream land. I hope you had something that might be said to parallel such a peaceful day.....

5814

enclosure from Mrs. Sterling

5814

Monday, December 8th, 1952.

Memorandum:

I was thinking only this afternoon how odd Santa Klaus would look if depicted in a cloud of betterflies instead of a flurry of snow flakes. What impelled that conclusion was the fact that on this 8th day of December there was a host of lovely orange and yellow butterflies ginting beautifully in and through the slanting rays of the afternoon sun, and what with the thermometer in the mid 70's and a balmy warm breeze blowing from the Gulf, it made no sense to glance at the calendar and not be able to believe that things were as they seemed.

Tonight the sky is cloudless and the balmy breeze continues from the South, with all the doors and windows of the house open and everything except the calendar suggesting it is middle Spring.

Today's post was heavy and the secretariat light, which advanced my sum total of comprehension as to what the mail contains to nothing, or thereabouts. Among other items, there seems to be a long letter from La Storm which I thrice attempted to wade through but never quite succeeded. I shall be able to do so in a day or so however, and in the mean time, I shall send her a brief "delaying" message.

From the hurried glance at one section of the letter, I gather she makes two suggestions.

1st, that since Kay will be cranking up the family plane and flying over to New Orleans shortly, it would be nice if she would swoop down, pick me up and bring me back to the bluff for a prolonged visit, or

2nd, that since Celeste mentioned her wish to drive me over to Charleston some time, it might be nice if she did just that, asking Caroline Dorman to drive over with us, so that after a little visit on the part of Celeste and Caroline,

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they would have each other's companionship on their way back to Louisiana while I would remain for my prolonged visit at the Bluff, --but indefinitely, or some such.

I shudder to think what a business there would be if Celeste ever dreamed that la Storm had made such a suggestion, for from the moment of learning of it, Celeste would be telephoning Caroline and hourly beating the drum to get me to say that I would consent to get into the big road. It goes without saying, of course, that I am not dreaming of going anywhere, but even though I am always declining, I must admit quite frankly that it is pleasant to receive invitations. I can expect no one to comprehend the local situation, however, and although I have tried hard enough to impart it to Machez friends, as you know they never have been able to understand. When I think of what would or might happen to many of the treasures I have preserved, were I to absent myself, and when I think of what might happen to vast segments of the garden, were I to turn my back, it makes me pause, --and conclude that only having once and for all decided that this or that can be sacrificed to destruction, -- then only should I, with peace of mind, give thought to getting into the big road for any visit anywhere.

I was sorry the plates didn't come so I could have a good supply in town last week end but wringing one's hands over dithering merchandise gets one on where. I had saved all the plate money in a tin box in the armoire, and was glad I had done so when today's post brought a bill for the next merchandise to the tune of \$237.60, for the contents of the tin box totaled \$248.00, and that will cover the new shipment when it arrives and pay the freight. Assuming that even though late, the impending shipment may arrive in time for a little turn over in town prior to the holiday bang-up, that will eventuate in a bit of "gravy" for fence repair and such like which is going to provide me with much zest immediately after the turn of the year.

A new shipment of blue roses arrived today, and I was told one was for me, but when the package was opened, there was but a single plant and so naturally I set that out for the lady in her own garden. The lady, of course, was dreadfully upset that once more something had gone wrong with her blue roses, and I am going to tell on the floor if, when this bush comes into flower, it produces a lovely white, yellow or pink, which seems to me it should, just to keep the progression in line with what has transpired thus far. -- Must knock off a little mail now and the n fold.....

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Tuesday, December 9th, 1952.
I saw the Lady at the Post Office this morning. There was a bit of futil fulmination because there was no air mail from London. I soothed by mentioning the fog, but was reminded that fog never effects cables. And that, of course, is true. There are other truths, too, but there is no point in enumerating them.

Memorandum:

I saw the Lady at the Post Office this morning. There was a bit of futil fulmination because there was no air mail from London. I soothed by mentioning the fog, but was reminded that fog never effects cables. And that, of course, is true. There are other truths, too, but there is no point in enumerating them.

And tonight Ed. Morrow says the five day fog has blown away. I found myself instinctively giggling in my beard. Ten days to "take in" Europe, and the first five fog bound. Some people seem to have luck and other merely luck, although I shouldn't be surprised at all if a picture post card came in, posted from the Pyramids or some such. That would be simply conforming to type and following the irrepressible impulse to hurtle through space, even though no particular point of direction matters. I suppose there must be some scientific word for such an impulse which seems to be possessed by so many people, but I don't know either the impulse or the scientific term describing it.

The weather remains marvelous, all sunshine and warm, although a cooler front moved in about 8:30 tonight, but even so, the thermometer will not go below 50 tonight and tomorrow will be back in the 70's.

Celeste had so many things to do in town, she had to go in early this morning and wasn't back by sun down, --beauty parlor, I believe, this and that person to be seen, luncheon with Betty Hertzgo and so on. She was distressed that the contractors had arrived this morning to put the drive-in covering at the left (facing) of the house before she had had an opportunity to move a cape jasmine or two which tended to gum up the business. Naturally I was glad to take over that problem, and the work began at once on the brick pillars on the far side of the drive, duplicating those incorporated in the gallery itself. They were good workmen who have done much construction work in the Parish and on the plantation, and always to everyone's satisfaction. About 3 this afternoon I chanced to pass that way and was impressed by the growth of the new pillars. I was also impressed by the am

fact that to my imperfect vision, the brick pillars were not precisely parallel to those of the gallery, but rather seemed turned about an inch or an inch and a half out of line. Naturally, I said nothing but a little later I did ask a negro with an experienced eye if the pillars were properly lined up, and he told me he thought they were "a-headin' off toward Mr. Carter's a mite." It will be so nice on the morrow if an air mail comes from the right direction and if the lady never pauses long enough to see in what direction the pillars are heading.

It's a bit curious how infrequently we hear from Daisey in the Dell, it seems to me, but I reckon the poor thing may well be in a tizzy over the impending holidays and such like. I find myself thinking of her as in the same class with half a dozen other people of our acquaintance, - Edith Wyatt Moore, for example, who, if ever so slight a re-alignment had been made by the Creator at the time of birth, each would have made that last hurdle that separates the area of something very nice from something that is extraordinary. In such groups there are as many divisions, of course, as there are individuals, and it is for the Daisey in the Dell bracket whose situation somehow seems especially worthy of pity since because of her particular personality, she probably is the most lonely of all, lacking as she does that element of personal satisfaction that comes to many another in the same general category who find recompense in their association with other people, whether the latter comprehend what is being talked about or not.

I galloped through a couple more pages of Myerson's "Speaking of Man" last night and found much of it instructive and some of it hilarious. It is so seldom one runs across a book of such profundity that is written by a man with a sufficient sense of humor to season the more learned paragraphs with dashes of lighter fare so as to make the whole pie quite edible and sometimes quite tart. For example, he tosses in, in a section discussing the feud between biological and sociological forces: --A man once visited Heaven, saw three women walking in circles. After every few steps, each woman administered to her own buttocks a swift kick. The astonished visitor asked how long they had been doing that (interruption)...the astonished visitor asked why they were doing that and St. Peter, stopping to light up his pipe explained that when they had presented themselves for entrance, he had asked them what qualifications they possessed and each had hastened to explained she was a virgin, and when he pointed out that that was of no consequence in Heaven, and for the last century or two they have been kicking themselves ever since. So much for Dr. Myerson, and so much for this dull memo. I enclose another Sterling notation.....

to report that she had been in the wooded section, miles to the Northeast of town, calling on white women Welfare clients. Her day, and that it was first dark before she got out of the woods, Wednesday, December 10th, 1952. At the point of marriage of her daughter on December 1st. But the point of her telephone was to say that she had run up on another remarkable ex-communicated artist. -- a 16 year old, untutored poor white girl who has done some wonderful canvases and more other things. I believe has done some murals for the crack-pot church which flourishes among these benighted hillbillies way off there in the hills. -- the neighborhood, in fact where "A Man Called Horse" is a scene to eight years ago and two the lady's throat because it just that

Memorandum:

The enclosure speaks for itself, --and the writer, and everybody concerned.

I asked the clerk to run through this for me just before I dropped by the house for a spot of 9 o'clock coffee, and the lecture that developed on expenses seemed unusually funny, since the hostess went on to explain that she and her husband simply had to cut down on their expenditures for Christmas gifts, what with how they both are trying so hard to make every penny count,-- (I'll say it counts) and what with each of them touring Europe this year, etc., etc., etc. There must be some relationship, mixed up in my mind, as having some pertinence to the matter in question, since I mentally found myself thinking that "it isn't the cough that carries you off but the coffin they carry you off in."

The weather remains cloudless but a cold breeze off the ice cakes made it a little bitter to spend too long a time out of doors, and so I was delighted when the big old Texas and Pacific truck backed up and deposited three big cartons of corkery. This timely advent provided me with an excuse to spend the balance of my day on the wind sheltered gallery, rigging up packages for people like Miss Kate who have long waited with a fair degree of patience for the Grandperes they thought they had just before the Reverend Fathers took over the whole shooting match on behalf of the local sepia communicants of their institution.

He I was glad to have a couple of telephones of a personal nature today. Ora telephoned this morning at 9 to say that she had just been sent home from the hospital and was admonished to remain in bed for some time, and that a nurse was in attendance. I think the Williams family are trying to get another heir, -- they already have three or four, and whether this latest illness indicates the hopes are progressing or have been dashed, I know not, and of course, didn't inquire. The other call was from Mrs. Coombs tonight. She wanted

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to report that she had been in the wooded section, miles to the Northeast of town, calling on white moron Welfare clients all day, and that it was first dark before she got out of the woods, her car filled with holly which she plans for decorations at the marriage of her daughter on December 21st. But the point of her telephone was to say that she had run up on another remarkable primitif artist, -- a 16 year old, untutored poor white girl who has done some wonderful canvases and among other things, I believe, has done some murals for the crack-pot Church which flourishes among those benighted hill billies way off there in the hills, -- the neighborhood, in fact where "A Man Called Mildred" a couple or eight years ago cut the lady's throat because it just so happened that he found his knife open when he put his hand in his pocket. Mrs. Coombs has a job that few people would want but I am glad for her that she somehow manages to get so much of satisfaction out of a core that at best must be pretty dis-spiriting, at last from the angle of the humanities or sub-humanities, encountered.

Just after having raked Daisey in the Dell over the coals last night, there came a letter from her this morning, poor little, chic-a-dee, I shall try to find it among the strange assortment of odds and ends, -- ends that are open and some unopened, in the curious assortment coming to hand with the pre-holiday rush. There was a post card, too, from la Mamoulides, wondering why "they" hadn't heard from me lately. I shall respond shortly, but shall probably be the recipient of other such cards as time goes on and the interludes of quiet in between tend to be expended gradually between letters. The Mamoulides case is a somewhat curious one, apparently a soul craving contacts, although mixed up in a hurly burly of life that sees too many people every day of the week. I am thinkin of the girl who jumped from the window of the Century Com any when it dawned on her that Lyle, who had been kind to her, didn't have in mind proposing. I don't mean to infer anything parallel in Madam Mamoulides' case, but it would appear that this kind creature who apparently hasn't had too smooth an existence, is longing for some sort of an association which, I gather, is rather beyond her own capacity to realize.

In the horticultural department, I was amazed today when I discovered all the leaves on one of the big magnolias in the front garden at Melrose near the road had turned brown, although the tree has lost none of its leaves. I would assume lightening might have struck and killed the tree but there is no evidence such as iron bark. It's the first full grown magnolia grandiflora I have ever seen in such a condition, -- its limbs unbroken and sturdy in appearance, complete leaf coverage and as dead as a door nail. I must explore the cause and render a post mortem later.....

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Thursday, December 11th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Today's dawn was so clear and invigorating I instinctively felt the desire to be sharing it with little Miss Lee. The lawns weren't green, but a lovely satiny silvery gray that seemed as smooth as the cloudless sky which presented that same silvery gray quality that it sometimes does on cloudless days just before the sun peep over the horizon, turning the earth into gold and the sky into blue. A pale moon lingered on in the zenith, and it was one of those moments that so often seem to come at sunset on the ocean when one wishes Time would stand still for an eon or two.

The frost impressed me particularly for it again impressed on me the fact that there seem to be differences in that phenomenon in that some frost, apparently depending on the state of the other weather conditions, bite sharply into vegetation while at other times it turns out to be purely decorative and does no harm to plant life at all. I had not put pajamas on the camellias last night, as the weather reports had predicted a low of but 38, which doesn't suggest a frost, and, to my delight when the sun was up and the frozen dew disappeared, there wasn't the slightest evidence that it had done any harm.

With the physical world so pretty, I felt the shock of human disgruntleness when I dropped by next door to give the lady an address. She was making a great racket because, contrary to her specific instructions, Orellia had used her hands to try scrubbing out paint from a dress instead of trying to get it off with a stick dipped in gasoline. As the paint had been on the dress for two or three weeks and was accordingly fairly well dried in, I can't imagine anybody getting very far hitting at it with a stick that had been dipped in gasoline. If I had a servant willing to set bare hands to the task, I should have been grateful to servant and God alike for my good luck. But that wasn't the reaction I witness. As a matter of fact, the main complaint was based on the fact that while the mistress had spent all that time going to Mass at 7 in the morning, the servant had contrived to ruin the religious benefits accruing to the mistress by not following instructions. It's all so confusing to me and fills me with wonder

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as to what value that religion has which impells one to go to Mass before sun up and puts the communicant in a stew before breakfast. As in so many another instance, I guess it isn't so much the religion that is at fault as those who perform all the tricks of the business with adroitness and dispatch but fail to gain anything for the spirit.

And then the post brought no air mail from London, and that provoked a sermon, too. But no day can be without its compensations, and the promise of being in the big road came to the fore and eventually the ladies took out for Mansura where they will remain until tomorrow night, and, among my other blessings I count one of them as being found in the fact that save for the coored folks, I am alone on the plantation tonight. It seems as though I ought to be able to find something to complain about on my own hook, but for the life of me, I can't think of anything in particular just off hand.

I didn't work too late last night but did knock off a few letters of no moment, including one to la Montespan, in which with a certain malaciouslyness, I mentioned various ideas I had for planting this or that, "in the event my bonus from the plantation this year permits such extravagance". I understand the master sees my letters addressed to that lady, and I thought the mention of a bonus might be a timely whimsey on my part, since I never received any such thing from Melrose.

Before this late paragraph, I should have referred to the enclosure which, you will agree, is a pure sight. I declare those Texans, in their mania for anything so long as it is outrageously over sized, have really stirred up something in this latest sample of their foolery. This pseudo note came from Mary Dagget Lake, attached to a letter containing a couple of addresses of people to whom she requests me to write, and I am therefore retaining the letter, but I thought you would enjoy seeing her enclosure. I haven't had an opportunity to go over the design carefully but I gather from a casual glance that it probably contains a number of features that might be of value as reference, should one ever be interested in reproducing some of the details for one reason or another, and I therefore suggest that we preserve this piece of paper along with other treasures, in case we should ever have occasion to refer to it.

I have cast about in search of some explanation of the condition of the Grandiflora magnolia, the one that is the study in brown instead of green, and am advised by the college Horticultural Department that sometimes an electric shock from a field of electricity will kill a tree without any evidence of a bolt of electricity ever being apparent. Perhaps this explains the condition I

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Friday, December 12th, 1952.

Memorandum:

Another perfectly elegant day, -- all sunshine and sufficiently bracing to make gardening less labor than a response to the impulse for scuffling about, induced by the amplitude of ozone.

The ladies returned tonight along about first dark. Celeste was the happier because she found to letters from London awaiting her, -- one penned on Thursday a week ago and the other on Friday. I reckon the fog had probably delayed their start.

Pat was at the air port to meet J. A. and the "drove around England" on Thursday, got as far into the country as Oxford and saw two big castles. Nothing was said about fog. The wife of Pat's immediate superior was ill, making it imperative that Pat remain in London, so J. A. planned to head out for Paris on Saturday. Celeste talks about J. A. planning to take in Rome among other places, and it is my understanding that he plans to hop back to New York tomorrow, which is certainly absorbing a lot of Europe in a few days. I suppose there will be varying stories about the return date, in view of the letter from la Montespan, for I assume the New York interlude will be charged off against Rome or some such.

I talked with Ora again today. She is feeling ever so much better, and although the nurse will remain with her for some time, she is able to sit up a little. I know not if she is just getting over a miscarriage or is suffering what is for her the usual "misere" of pregnancy. With a daughter in college and two or three other offspring, I can't imagine why they, -- she and R. B. -- insist on going through all the requisite excitement for another heir when Ora's health is so delicate.

She asked me if I had seen the article in the Picayune a week or so ago, -- a Sunday one, -- about Roswood, and its restoration. I think I was not jotting down a daily Memorandum when I used to visit Roswood, but I may or may not have mentioned it in some of the journals which eventually came to your true hand. It was the big old house some 20 miles above Natchez, -- not too far from Alcorn College, and after two or three visits there, I once took the Madam and Robina. Well, anyway, it was a lovely old place, built by Dr. Ross in the

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1850's. When I found the place, it was being occupied by three or four negro tenants, the rooms being sufficiently large to house an entire colored family. The silver doornobs were particularly lovely, but they disappeared as between one visit and another a little later.

Eventually I tracked down the family and found Dr. Ross's grandson living in Natchez, --or rather dying in Natchez, for he was a man in his 70's and afflicted with cancer. He was so kind as to let me borrow his grandfather's journal, and of course I got the thing transcribed forthwith. It is an interesting journal, and especially because it gives a day to day account of the building of "Osswood." I shall be so happy to get in touch with the new owner, -- somebody who saw the place and loved it and put all the little money he had in it for its restoration. Ora is getting me a copy of the article from which I shall get the man's name, and after jottin it down, I'll send the article to you. Wouldn't it be nice to let the man have an account of this lovely old mansion at the time of its building. Well, we'll see what we can do about it.

I finished the Myerson book, and discovered a biography of the man at the back of the book, --the last couple records. His father was a Rabbi and the family lived in Russia or what was "ussia," then and now, --1881 but Lithuanias somehow mushroomed on the spot in between but died. The father came to New England and the family followed and eventually Myerson, fils, became one of the country's great neurologists and psychiatrists. "Speaking of Man" is the book he did most of the work on after he had been stricken with heart disease and knew his days were numbered. I would recommend the book to few people because I know few people to whom it would mean anything, but regardless of that, it is also a most interesting book and I learned a lot of things from it, and got a bit of entertainment, too. And, it must be agreed, that is something of a triumph in these days when so much stuff pours out of the presses.

Tonight the program is going to be different in that I am going to do no mail but rather I am reserving the whole evening to rounding up my Christmas decors. The gay carillon of silver bells suspended from their red ribbons will grace the andirons, the candles will flame in the windows and the spirit of Christmas within the next half hour will be emerging all over the place. It's so pleasant to undertake all the little odds and ends, what with the definite impression that one isn't actually alone in the undertaking.....

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Sunday, December 14th, 1952.

Memorandum:

And so, may I tell you, Santa Claus made his round on Saturday.

I think I mentioned in Friday's memo that after chatting with you, I planned introducing the spirit of Christmas by way of hanging sets of carillon and lighting the Christmas candles. Well, I carried out my intention and Lo! when the morning's mail arrived, there was an elegant big package, arriving in perfect order, which came from old Santa, and last night I began my Christmas celebration in utter happiness by spending an entire evening with Peter Illyovitch and mein lieber W. Ludwig von B., and I am hastening to clear my desk tonight so I can repeat the program tonight, and bring it to a close with that most satisfying of sensations, --the realization that I shall be able to repeat and repeat the same enchantment in the days stretching ever so far ahead.

I must say the whole business delights me no end, and the recordings are so magnificent that my soul seems to expand the more as I play them over and over again. Telepathy always inclines to function in the direction of those for whom we feel a natural affinity, but never does it seem to operate so perfectly as through the medium of such loveliness.

I have the gay card swaying here before me on my desk, with the sepia angel fiddling madly and with each vibration from this machine, this heavenly musician seems to be tempting me to forsake the keyboard for the revolving disk along side. Surely this is a delicious Christmas, and the nicest part of it is the fact with each note from the disks will automatically bring me a little closer in tune with little Miss Lee who, by some Divine contrivance, makes everything from Christmas Day to Christmas Day seem really worth while. I shall touch upon this matter at subsequent sittings, but for the moment I shall content myself

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by merely saying: "Bless your heart for making mine so happy."

And my thoughts turned toward little Miss Lee quite often on Friday night, following the effort at decors and while I was reading a little before folding up my beard. I was in the midst of a rather dull book by De Camp, -- "Lands Beyond" but I found a lot of data in the volume which fascinated me, --not the least of which, and for reasons which to you are obvious, that there was much said about Ernst of Schwabia and all the remarkable legends that grew up around that fabulous person. Somehow everything seemed to fit itself into making a perfect setting for my happiest of week ends, and I don't mind saying that it must be ever so evident to an understanding heart what ingredients went in, --through chance, -- to make it so.

Ernst of Schwabia, Peter Illovitch, Ludwig von B and little Miss Lee. Surely you will agree that is a remarkable conglomeration of personalities and only you can imagine how much they all meant to me, being thus joined so unexpectably together.

And aside from these European personalities, there was mail on Saturday from Europe, although by a non-European personality.

J. H. sent two letters which were so indicative of the Henry rush through centuries of historical monuments. His letter, dated from Paris, said he had spent Thursday and Friday in London, and, as Pat couldn't get away, he had gone on to Paris on Saturday, --by train, -- where he spent Sunday, having taken in the city and Versailles, where I can't imagine him finding himself. Then from Geneva came a letter, saying he had gone there on Monday by bus, and was heading on South toward Grenoble, the Riviera and Rome, after which he intended going back to London through Germany, and probably would fly from London over the week end, so, I assume, --and in view of the Montepan letter, he probably is back in Manhattan by now.

There is something so typical about the speed with which all this is accomplished and the skimming over of vast mileage to what seems to me little or no point, that I have jotted all this down even though it cannot possibly be of interest. But now I must get on with a continuation of last night's program. Again my thanks to little Miss Lee for providing me with such an elegant holiday season.....

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Monday, December 15th, 1952.

How nice to find your Wednesday letter in this morning's post.

It is so nice having had this opportunity for a little chat in spite of all the demands on your time and energy which are swirling ever higher about you as the holidays approach and then, in view of prospective guests, will probably level off not before the turn of the year. It all sounds so terrific that I shall keep the candles in the chapel flaming, as I hold the thought that in spite of all confronting you, your health, by some miracle, may hold.

It is difficult to imagine the state of mind that doesn't function sufficiently to picture what such an avalanche of visitors, and especially at this time, must call for by way of physical and mental demands, but perhaps that is just what proves to us that there is such a thing as the spirit of Christmas, --knowing as we do that in spite of all the thoughtless people in the world, there are some like little Miss Lee who are in such a different category.

As you have already learned, the flat Santa package arrived before your letter and not having been forewarned, I broke the seals and am already thoroughly enjoying my own Christmas. As for the other package, --the one which is more square, it hasn't come to hand as yet. I am so appreciative of your kindness in setting me straight as to the contents, and you may rest assured I shall be guided by your message when opening it.

And may I say how much I appreciate your kindness in setting me straight on other points and especially the possible perspective that is expected to come into focus, --if not shelved, as between now and the ensuing few weeks. What with all the hurlyburly attending your present days, I wonder you have time to think of anything even matters, as of the one referred to, which seems so fraught with strange and unexpected potentials.

It goes without saying that during all these enervating days, my thoughts flow constantly in a single direction praying that the ultimate decision may be the very best all around.

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It goes without saying that I am deeply touched by your kindness in providing me with the clipping you so thoughtfully pasted on the extra sheet which you enclosed with your letter. I had heard a sentence or two regarding the matter, but as the static was especially raucous at the time, I couldn't make much sense out of it. But now, because of your thoughtfulness, it is all quite clear and altogether heartening. Patience pays off in the long run, and any burden is the easier to toat if there is a glimmer of hope at the end of the road.

Through your clipping, I learned, among other things, that the matter touched on in the article had been released for public knowledge from --of all places, --Maine. I don't know why that struck me with such force, except that I suppose we are inclined to associate scientific advances with large urban centers, even though in other fields of endeavor, the great contributions to human betterment haven't depended on metropolitan masses for its place of origin.

It is interesting how much like impulsive children we are after reaching maturity when something, calculated to relieve some inconvenience is brought to the surface and how imperative it seems to us that something be done about the business immediately. Thanks to the training in being forced to proceed as best one can under existing circumstances, we eventually reach a point where wonderful satisfaction is achieved in the mere realization of the possibility of solving a problem becomes apparant, and thus it is, thanks to the information you have provided, that I can adjust myself with vast reservoirs of calm and patience in contemplating the realization of things suggested as a possibility, and I can maintain my present pace in doing what I can under existing conditions until the day in the future dawns when some advantage may be take of this new discovery for the benefit of ~~of~~ so many people to whom it will mean so much.

We shall return to this subject on occasion from time to time, and all the moments in between I shall be blessing you for your kindness in tossing this inspiring information.

A telephone about 8 o'clock from Manhattan indicates that J. H., instead of returning to London, flew to New York directly from Rome, and so within the next day or two, I suppose we shall be having a first hand report from him as to how goes Europe. It ought to be entertaining if not too illuminating.

And now for a bit of Peter Illyovitch and Ludwig and so to bed, and the happier will be the sitting, thanks to your nice Wednesday chat...

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Tuesday, December 16th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find the fat package in today's post. It traveled perfectly, and is sitting, unopened, along side my armoire, where I am leaving it intact. --I think -- for another day or two, if nobility can keep to the fore and temptation doesn't get the better of me and the passing throng.

People came before mail time this morning and people were here all day, --in and out,--and I had a couple of gardeners to look after, --three, I guess it was, and as I prefer to open packages that mean much to me when I am alone and when the appropriate moment arrives, I am trying to follow the "Do Not Open Until Christmas" admonition, although, in truth, I must admit that come about to morrow or the next day, and I shall be into the business. But tonight I'm just going to have a little chat with you, mosey leisurely through a warm bath and then collapse into my armchair and let Peter Illyovitch and Ludwig do all the work of begetting relaxation for me.

J. H. came this afternoon about 3. Celeste, in response to a telephone from New York or New Orleans, met him at the Alexandria air port. I haven't seen her since she returned and know nothing as to the number of passengers on the plane. A letter from la Montespan shortly will undoubtedly tell all.

As for his European jaunt, J. H. seems to have had a wonderful time. He journeyed fro Grenoble to Nice, did a bit of gaming at Monte Carlo and then went on to Rome.

I asked him if he was to find himself in Europe again this week end, in which place he would like to be. His response was immediate: --"Nice".

An air mail to Celeste, posted from Grenoble, arrived this morning. That just about illustrates any agency's attempt to

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keep up with the Henrys.

Tonight I heard a part of Ed. Morrow's report from Seattle, covering his trip across the continent from New York by night. I liked what he had to say, the character of the country above which he was flying, the nature of its Geography and History, --its contemporary civilization, its former attributes where the wagon trains for Oregon cut through the aboriginal bands of Omahass and Sioux. On the decks of ocean liners, I suppose we have all entertained parallel thoughts, especially when heading westward over the uncharted paths of Mayflower and all the rest of the colonial vessels, at best probably not so comfortable as the Cassatota canavans, --something a little less than aquatic covered wagons, wondering what thoughts stirred within the breasts of those earlier travelers, and, sometimes, searching our own souls a little, too, as we wondered about all the circumstances that finally contrived to bring us to about the same geographic spot. I reckon the explorers, discoverers and colonial travelers had more than ample time to ponder on those points that well up in people's souls in such places. In our day, we didn't have too much time but we had enough during the 6 days of voyaging. As I understand it, the westward crossing by air now requires but six hours. That is adequate for much thinking, of course, but I'm glad you and I had more than that segment of time in our initial westward journey. As I look back at it, such a limited space of time wouldn't have seemed quite enough to take stock of yesterday, anticipate tomorrow and try to comprehend a little of that little slice in between.

But why I speculate on all this, and especially at this season when, on receiving this memo, you will be rather too busy to give thought to such matters, for a billion demands will be claiming your immediate attention.

And it just occurs to me that I must not forget to say that a package goes forward in the same post that starts this letter on its way to you.

I have put two or three paper sacks in the top of the package in order that you may divest yourself of the outer wrappings in the most convenient trash basket.

And now I will fold up my beard for tonight. I hope you may be doing the same right now.....

1082

5830

Wednesday, December 17th, 1952.

Memorandum: I might as well break down and confess that the temptation was too great for me and I did comprise enough to peep into the fat package just enough to sight a perfectly splendid snowflake. Then I thought better of my mis-deed, and happier, too, for having conceded a point, and while I am momentarily determined to hold off a little while longer, I know perfectly well that curiosity is going to be so great that before I have called it a day, I shall be going just a step further to see what lies beyond the huge, lovely snow crystal.

The weather has turned warm again, thanks to a mild breeze meandering in from the Gulf and I am making the most of the favorable thermometer readings to do a heap of transplanting and general pushing about of things.

The seasonal mail, of course, is beginning to increase in proportion to the approach of Christmas. I suppose there were a couple of dozen letters today, along with about as many cards, all of which are enclosed in a manila envelope in the armoire, for the dawdling secretaries were among those students participating in some kind of a baseball tournament at some school above Matchitoches, and so we shall have a go at the mail on the morrow, including one letter sitting slap on the top which feels pleasantly rotund and which is addressed in a familiar hand.

A package came today from Carl Harness. It is in the nature of an ash tray, --a replica in miniature of a wheel barrow, which will make me, in my role of gardener, recall the ashtray while toating trash, and in my role of scribe will remind me of the garden as I make use of it here on my desk. I suppose the copper bed of the barrow is about three inches over all, while the frame work of some lovely dark polished wood is perhaps 6 inches in length. It seems to be a precise replica of a real wheelbarrow, and the little wheel turns around merrily, and somehow reminds me of the flax wheel which now graces the African House, having the same ridges around

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the rim. Of course Mr. Harness made it by hand and will be treasured for its intrinsic cleverness and even more through sentimental association with its maker.

Oddly enough my mind has been dwelling on various aspects, --- of all things, --control of the dispensing of liquor, these past days. Dr. Myerson's opinion that alcohol, being a drug, ought not to be advertised with too much enticement, strikes me as having some virtue as an idea. I have come to the conclusion that they would do a lot better, --the fanatical prohibitionists, --if they concentrated on trying to discourage advertisement rather than sale of alcoholic beverages, although I am not at all certain that advertising in any way increases the sale of alcohol to those particular persons who are most incapable of managing the stuff, once it gets inside of them.

I can't for the life of me think what has brought on this line of speculation although I suppose the numerous automobile accidents in this area, --seemingly all white people,-- during the past three or four weeks, has probably had something to do with it.

The ladies across the fence seemed unusually happy this morning. The mantle pieces are clogged with Christmas things, such as stockings, mangers, cards, etc., while last night the Reverend Fathers passed that way, --one of the younger ones to rig up and electrify the Christmas tree while one of the elders talked about Rome with J. H. who had attended Mass "for a few moments" last Sunday at St. Peters and observed the Holy Papa and a flock of Cardinals at the service, --and such subject matter would quite naturally be of interest to the local clergy, I expect.

It would appear on the "flying saucer" front that the stock was anticipated about right although the Grandperes will be exhausted, I believe before a week has elapsed. Did I mention that Ora telephoned from her bed, asking if I could send her some plates which she had in mind sending thither and yon as Christmas gifts. She is definitely on the mend but as she must stay put for another week or two, she finds the cane river items much easier to select as gifts than searching for odds and ends in the local stores. The inch of ice in the big pot has melted, thanks to today's sun, and I am hoping as much may be said for weather conditions in your neighborhood. Do try to grab a moment to yourself now and then if possible, even if it is nothing better than a half hour collapse in the Embassy or some such.....

8882

5832

Thursday, December 19th, 1952.

Memorandum:
How nice to have your elegant letter in today's post.

How you find time to indulge in such a jolly chat and to acquaint me with so many fascinating particulars at this busy-busy season astonishes me. But I have enjoyed every word and call down blessings from on high in appreciation of your kindness.

And may I thank you, too, for taking care of the Library of Congress thing and for adding so many names of books for the consideration of Congressional Library approval. I'm so glad you also added the Proust and Saxon items for if we keep dinging away on the same key long enough, we shall perhaps eventually get some where regardless. I think I haven't asked for the Saxon item more than four times a year for the past six or seven, so there's just no telling.

And before leaving the subject, I might add that sooner or later, I may send along a few greeting cards which are coming to hand, --after the holidays. One of these pleased me much on two counts, --first it was good to hear from John Knight, posted somewhere in Arizona, and secondly because the card carried a lovely Yucca plant in flower on its front page.

And may I thank you for the particulars about little Miss Roundtree, --what a name, -- and what a radio personality. I must say, however, that last Sunday night I thought she did rather better than usual. I didn't know that Herr Spivach had edited the Mercury, and I was interested in your surmise as to the possible association between those two permanent numbers in the radio program. They certainly get the big names on their show and I'm wondering how they do it. I chanced to hear Mrs. Anna Rosenberg on Sunday night and found her voice and accent striking. I know nothing about Mrs. Rosenberg, but somehow I gathered from the quality of her voice that she might be a little wind swept, have a good mind and capable of suffering from something approaching exhaustion. So many numb-skulls get into Government through this or that

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Thursday, December 19th, 1952.
brand of pull so that, as in Mrs. Rosenberg's case, it is rather heartening to have the feeling at least one got there by gray matter. If I wanted to know something about some question of which I understood nothing and Mrs. Rosenberg was recognized as an expert, I should like to have her set me stright, for I am under the impression she might be able to reel off the fact as she really comprehended them, and that her guess, in cases of which she wasn't sure, might be pretty pat.

And may I thank you for acquainting me with avrious aspects of radio reception -- here, there and so on. Some of the commentators, listed as unpopular in certain quarters, puzzle anyone but little Miss Lee and me, I guess. I can think of few annoyances more difficult to put up with, and yet I have so often been ~~sms~~ sustained by the realization that in reality nothing really matters on the negative side, just so long as there is ever the positive side which comprehends the real merits and the promise of understanding, but complete understanding when the petty irritants have taken their place on the level of things that don't count so much.

You ask about news from Waco, --and so does Dora, but I have heard nothing since last I passed along to you whatever came to hand. There was a note from Lucille today. However, -- sort of a "Christmas card", with a few lines, indicating that Carolyn is well Helen, --I assume at Helen's house, although that is but a guess, and that Carolyn is doing a swell job and that "they" came to help me observe a birthday or some such, which would seem to suggest Helen is getting up a little, I hope. I have dropped Helen a line from time to time, and written Carolyn once or twice at Marshall, but haven't heard anything. I shall write Lucille for additional particulars, suggesting she take pen in hand as soon as the holiday merry-go-round comes to a halt, --if, indeed, it ever does in Lucille's life. I sent a Cane River Country plate to each of them at their respective home addresses and suppose I shall hear from them regarding same eventually.

A note from the Fort Worth Campbells announce five or them may come either at Christmas or New Years, asking what I want for Christmas and asking that I have dinner with them at Baton Rouge or some such place. Why Baton Rouge, I can't imagine but perhaps they are hazy on their geography. I did a bit more peeping today and loved what I discovered.....

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5834

Robina 7/16

Friday, December 19th, 1952.
Memorandum:
Only tonight has it occurred to me that in reality, this letter will probably reach you only after Christmas has come and gone. But it will still be holiday time, and so I want to pass along a Christmas story regardless.

Every year it seems as though we tend to contemplate December 25th as some date way off yonder until all of a sudden some circumstance or other releases the feeling that Christmas is just in the offing, and with that realization, the advent of the season is upon us.

It came to me this year, --and for no particular reason, -- when Celeste was telling me about a round of shopping a couple of weeks back, and how the I. J. Schwartzberg store was the most elegant in Central Louisiana. She mentioned having bought two separate gifts, asking that they be wrapped and sent for her, -- one North, the other South. She recalled that I had met Mr. Schwartzberg twice, --just to say how do you do, --and that it was he who had been so polite as to write me, prior to the meeting of the Historical Society, that he contemplated my advent with anxiety. It seems Mr. Schwartzberg chanced to be in the store at the time Celeste was giving addresses for her purchases, and he instructed the clerk to have the packages wrapped in different holiday paper, the one from the other, and with matching ribbons, even though Celeste said that since the gifts were going in opposite directions and neither recipient would see the other, the type of paper and ribbon used could just as well be identical, -- but Mr. Schwartzberg insisted, and so it was done.

Somewhat all this chatter made me realize the the leaves of the December calendar were fast falling and that we were approaching the 25th. Somehow, too, by some quirk of the mind, I thought of that most remarkable gift ever presented to me by a Melrose citizen of color, --the frog. I think I have mentioned how little Elam brought it in his bare hands as a gift for the new fountain, and I loved it, --with only the wrappings of his two ebony hands.

Well, with all these thoughts flying about in my mind, --yesterday's post arrived, bringing me a modest sized package,

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Wrapped in somewhat crumpled old brown paper that had obviously been used before. Inside the wrapping was a slightly battered box, once contrived for holding Hershey bars but obviously long since worn out so far as that purpose was concerned. I love Hershey bars, and so my heart was momentarily made glad at the prospect but then made sad when it became obvious there were no chocolate bars within. But inside I did find two tiny fruit cakes, --odd looking things, somehow suggesting a sausage, since each was about 8 inches in length, 2 inches around, and tightly covered with transparent cellophane, even as a package of cigarettes. There was no tissue wrapping paper but to fill in the blank spaces at the side and end of the Hershey box were the sides of another old Hershey box that had apparently been dismantled as a filler. Having seen the remarkably disreputable packages I can make, you will scarcely believe me when I tell you this one struck me as being even more outrageous than I could stiff up.

Naturally I thought of poor little old Elam, now grown up from 12 to 20, and as he lives in Houston now, I figured he had perhaps sent me a gift. I consulted the wrapper. Picture my astonishment when I discovered the name, printed in ink: - "K. J. Schwartzberg, Albert Avenue (his home address) Alexandria, La."

Well, you could have knocked me down with a fender.

But then the thing began to grow on me, the psychiatric department began perking and automatically I began doing a big business--- a merchant prince, glutted with fancy paper and dainty ribbon, goes home from his elegant emporium, decides to send a present to somebody he has met casually but twice, decides he'll take a hand at doing his own selecting a wrapping, --and there is the result. Truth being what it is in relation to Fiction thus offers up so ething that a novelist would scarcely conjure up. I love the whole thing and want to pass along the tale to you. I shall also pass it along to Dora, seeing what he can do with it. For there, indeed, is something rather extraordinary by way of Christmas.

This afternoon the store gallery was crowded, what with a brisk rain falling, and everyone was a-giggle. Celeste and Madam Regard, heading for the beauty parlor, backed out of the garage with gusto, striking one of the new brick pillars supporting the equally new porte-cochere, and knocking it sideways at a 60 degree angle. The other pillar that was cock-eyed to begin with, stood firm. The whole outfit, as of tonight is just a plain mess.

So runs out this last Friday night before Christmas. I have thought of you so often today, wondering what weather was obtaining, how things domestic and business were whirling, and tonight wishing I might join you for a few giggles over the harum-scarum way things turned in this neighborhood today.....

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Sunday, December 22nd, 1952.

Memorandum

I have been pilgrimage busy this week end, but withal rather pleasantly engaged, and the weather, being mild and sunny, contributed to the pleasant shape things assumed.

There were four sets of pilgrims, --Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas being represented, before noon on Saturday. I was glad of a break early in the afternoon which gave me a chance to bring the incoming mail up to date, and it of course reflects the seasonal bulk.

What with a flock of odds and ends to attend to this morning, I be-stirred myself a little earlier than usual, waiting until 10 o'clock for a shower and fresh raiment before going across the fence to receive some dinner guests on Celeste's behalf, as she and Adam Regard had gone to late Mass. Just as I arose from the depths of my tub, a tapping at my door impelled me to journey there a-drip, and to my surprise there I found the Choclays, or however they spell their names, --those Lake Charles people whom I like. But I laughed when they expressed regret they had pulled me out of bed. They wouldn't come in, having stopped by merely to leave me a bottle of some imported wine. That impells me to remark how regrettable it is that people, --those knowing nothing about wines, -- seem to feel the urge when purchasing "wet groceries" to invest in a gift that is of some foreign concoction, -- some rare Burdun, Chablis or some such, which I, for one, and few others I know of, care anything about, whereas a bottle of some standard domestic would fill the bill so much more to everyone's satisfaction.

Celeste's guests were a Colonel and Mrs. Mark Roy, the Colonel being Mansura or Marksville born and bred and having been in school with J. H. and Stephen, although except for occasional contacts with the General at the Pentagon, Mark has seen none of his former associates in years. After dinner I gave them a tour. I discovered Mrs. Roy was formerly Jane Gillespie. Oddly enough only the day before I had mentioned to Adam Regard that Hollywood plantation in Natchez had some of the finest camellia trees I ever saw. She recalled this when Jane remarked that Hollywood Plantation

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was here childhood home and that she still controls a part of it, holding the thought that oil may ooze there one of these days. She said she had never met anyone before outside of "atchez who had ever heard of Hollywood plantation, let alone having ever seen the place, and of course the knowledge that she had here encountered someone who loved the old place, felt that indefinable sense of "hominess" that somehow arises under such circumstances.

Other people passing this way was Overton Brooks, U. S. Representative who says he heads back for the opening of Congress with the feeling that sooner or later a slip is bound to develop between the Liberal and the Old Guard wings of the Republican Party in Congress so that the Old Guard, hoping to sweep all financially profitable Governmental undertakings into their private utilities pockets, will be restrained "a little". I thought of this tonight when on Martha Roundtree's program, that Senator from Dakota or Idaho or some such, voiced his hope and opinion that T.V. A. and other vast Governmental projects would be sold to private concerns. That certainly would be a crime, and let us hope the split in the majority comes before any such thing is attempted.

I hit upon an idea of rationing myself, so far as the Santa package is concerned. This morning I parceled out a bit of Good Cheer for our feathered friends, leaving Die Frau's stocking intact until Christmas Eve. I also plundered the packages containing the star shaped candle holders. I am so delighted with their shape and I find they suit perfectly the shorter candles from last year, so last night I fitted them out, and they currently grace the two little end tables on each side of the fireplace in the living room and xx look as bright as buttons, gleaming in the soft light.

On Saturday, too, I ran across the Lestan package for Madam Regard. I cannot tell you how deeply touched I was by this thoughtfulness on the part of that most extraordinary of personalities, --little Miss Lee. Surely, one must admit, there is a personality that beats anything ever yet contrived in thinking of others to the point of anticipating needs so far beyond those that would ever have entered the head or heart of any one else.

And what with several unexplored packages in the original Manhattan shipment, I head into the big week, happy as a clam because of the thoughtfulness of one precious soul. This is one of the happiest Christmases I can remember and while a bevy of circumstances often contributed in one way or another to bring happiness to such a peak, there is but a single person whose part is indispensable in all this, for while all other ingredients, --in single or in multiple blocks could be removed and the structure still stand, the Lee corner stone is the foundation stone which is identical with everything on which the balance depends and on which all the rest stands. God bless little Miss Lee.....

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Monday, December 22nd, 1952.
Memorandum:

A pleasant December sun, making it warm enough to get about coatless all day, and a pleasant new moon tonight, viewed with comfort in a light jacket. An inch of rain last night left everything a little soggy, but tomorrow ought to be just right for transplanting things doing best by Christmas change of situation.

Rumors regarding the holiday circulate and change as frequently as somebody can think up a new one. The latest prediction is that the Wenks are threatening to come early Christmas morning and will remain one day, two days, three days. I hope all of this is wrong, of course. Then there is word out the S. G., --juniors and seniors-- will come for the week end, that they will not come for the week end, that they may come for Christmas day and they may come for New Years. Anything they do is just fine, --just so long as they don't do it. The Joe Henrys stated definitely last week they could not come. Yesterday they telephoned they probably could come, --and we shall undoubtedly know by midnight of the 25th. The potential fireworks in all this shuttling back and forth, --not in the shuttling but in the chance they may all gang up at the same moment is wonderful to contemplate, and I am gradually tucking things away in my armory against any sudden switch that may bring the Shreveport contingent prematurely.

I finally got around last night to knock off a few notes to people to whom I had neglected to send greetings to reach them before Christmas --and among these was Nina from whom we last heard when some place in South America. It seems rather odd there should have been such a long lapse but perhaps she had too many things to attend to on touching home base again in November. Fortunately I remember vaguely how one spells Carancahua Street, and I hope my note is forwarded if she isn't there. Locally, the post office reports the full volume of mail seemed to pass its peak on Saturday so perhaps everyone's routine will be approaching normalcy before Thursday arrives, I hope.

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I have turned through a few pages of Carlton Coon's "Caravan", read by your friend, Alexander Scourby. It is an informative book and rather tiresome in spots, having to do with the Arab world from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf. It is as good an account of the inception of the Moslem religion as I have run across, but some of its details cover too fine points for a volume embracing such a broad subject as how everything across North Africa and Asia Minor got that way.

It is my custom each November to round up a flock of books that I may want to skim through during the holiday season so the poor mail clerks will not have to bother with the additional burden of talking books at a time when parcel post packages seem to have the right of way. But this year I put off the business until so late that this season I am scuffling around in any old kind of reading material, none of it of much interest, but within a week or so I shall ask for better fare and may hope to secure it without clogging the U. S. mails.

I think it is time those who believe in the human side of Government began to formulate propaganda in favor of taking the wind out of the sails of those big business men of the Republican Party who currently are so busy beating the drum on the subject of efficiency. They seem to consider, among other things, that Government is a Science, --and I think, perhaps, that is where the attack should begin, --on that line of thinking. For Government is definitely an Art, not a Science, --or should be, if one really wants it to function according to the Lincoln concept of "of, by and for". I shudder a little as I contemplate all the big business men, named to posts in the new Government that is to be. They apparently labor under the illusion that humanities can be chalked up in the manner of a Certified Public Account concocting a balance sheet of financial assets and liabilities, and are "all sot" to proceed on that theory. Some of them seem to be guided by half the sentence of Jesus: - "Render unto Caesar, that which is Caesar's..." for getting there is a little more before the end of the sentence, having to do with that which is God's.

Well, Lord, it seems to me I might lay aside such considerations for the moment, and concentrate a little on manifestations of the current season. As a matter of fact, my candles are glowing brightly and the big snowflake, posed on the rim of my desk lamp, seemingly shimmers just perfectly with each tap of this machine. It's all so pleasant to shut out the hurly-burly world of outside and revel in the happiness that is mine this season, thanks to one little Miss Lee.....

1482

5840

Tuesday, December 23rd, 1952.
Memorandum:

Twenty millions times would not suffice to tell you how entranced I was to find your letter of the 17th in today's post.

Somehow, in view of all the mountains of things you had confronting you during the days between your last letter and the impending holiday, I had not anticipated a chat with you until after some of the excitement at subsided.

But here came your letter, quite intact, together with the sweet-sweet Ethiopian cherub and all, as a sort of birthday greeting for Arenbourg, and I am touched by the whole thing and entranced at our unexpected opportunity to compare notes.

There were fifty odd pieces of 1st class mail, --the bulk of them Christmas cards, no doubt, but although I had the services of two secretaries today for a wonder, --and because Christmas is approaching, I suppose, --with one appearing unexpectedly at noon and the other at first dark. But as I discovered at noon, one letter was enough for today, and so when the second assistant arrived tonight, I was altogether content to run through your letter and card a second time and let the balance of the letters rest in the armoire for some subsequent sitting. Thanks to you, my holiday season is slap happy and what with a musicale awaiting me later tonight, and my nobility still holding, a couple of packages still holding the promise for Christmas eve, not even the prospect of a somewhat hurly-burly Thursday can disturb the happiness which is all mine because of little Miss Lee.

That you were somewhat taken-a-back by the daring of the epistle from la Montespan, I am not at all surprised. Apparently she doesn't mind at all sending potential dynamite through the mails, and in it one finds at least one answer to Miss Sally's severally expressed question:

"Why doesn't F. have Celeste help him with his mail."

Off hand, you might say that at least a letter such as the one you referred to certainly ought to make mighty entertaining reading, were she indeed a secretary.

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Already there are signs of Christmas manifesting themselves about the plantation. For one thing, several of the grow up gentlemen have passed this way, ostensibly to say Howdy and to speculate on the chance that tonight's impending frost may induce more colds, while actually what they are "studying about", --the cotton money having long since been spent, is the hope that there may be a bit of "schnooze" standing about unused. And then there is the rest period so far as plantation operations are concerned, for everything is at a standstill giving a certain amount of leisure that on Christmas day will culminate in an "Hooray-Boys", -- a couple of days getting over it, --and then resumption of labor with no attention being paid to New Years day at all.

And then another sign of the times was Aurellia's tap at my door this morning before she had gone on to her labors across the fence. Andy was going to do some work at Arenbourg for us-es, and she came with him to ask -- of all things, --if I liked hog's head cheese. Frankly I could live without it, but naturally I lied and said there was nothing I was quite so crazy about. She explained that as soon as she got home after her work, she was going to start the wash pot going and when Andy came home, he and she were going to slay the hog they had raised and she had in mind making some fine hog's head cheese and bringing me some. I thought that was swell and that Andy out to knock off work a little early any way, so they wouldn't have to slaughter the animal by moonlight.

I suppose both Andy and Aurellia must be thirty or forty-ish and yet their enthusiasm over converting the hog into roasts and chops was as full of zest as children of 10, and as a contrast to the hum-drum attitude of so many more worldly rich but spiritually poor, the concerted excitement of the spirits of these two under-privileged souls was heart warming. By Christmas, a big platter of hog's head cheese will be mine and there will be more than one empty stomach passing this way who will lick their chops when they learn I'm going to share my business with them.

Thus do the pre-holidays slide along, and I have a feeling that mine are doubly happy because I contemplate them not as the impressions being registered in a single heart but rather because in all such matters, there is the definite realization that what really makes all life seem to have value is because it is being shared with one to whom it has precisely the same value as it does for me. My happiness for the holiday is guaranteed, thanks to you for all that made it so.....

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5842

Christmas Eve, 1952.

What with it being Christmas Eve and an absence of electricity, I could have been more inspired than I am now.

And as what with the candles burning along the side of the room and the room was more beautiful than I could have imagined.

Memorandum: On the morrow, our old friend, the mocking bird, and several of his associates will be busy at the suet ball which I have suspended just outside my window by moonlight, so they will find a big old surprise in their stocking by the dawn's early light. If they don't love it, they are crazy, for I, although not feathered, am entranced just glancing in that direction.

As for the candles which I saved last to open, they are quite the loveliest white tapers I have ever seen, while the touch of the forest in the medium of the pine cones set them off to such special advantage that I declare I have never seen lovelier tapers. And to what use I put them, will appear further along.

In today's post came a telegram from the Robert Campbells of Fort Worth, saying they would be arriving in Matchitoches on Christmas Eve and asking me to plan to have dinner with them in town on Christmas. The telegram had been mailed from Matchitoches two days earlier. Usually such messages are telephoned, but somehow this one wasn't.

As it scarcely seemed wise to absent myself when some of the more rare members of the family were scheduled to converge on the place on Christmas day, I set my mind to working to see how I could unscramble things a bit.

All day I had been casting about for an electrician, but all such engineers were on a frolic and half of the house was without electrical current. Fortunately it chanced to be in living room and the bath room, so that the reading machine, radio, etc., were not effected. Still, it would have been nice to have had lights.

Along about 4, I telephoned the hotel in town and left a message for the Campbells to telephone me. As convenient the phone turns out to be. They telephoned about 6 and I suggested that they rest a little, then come down here around 10 and they were enchanted at the prospect.

Then it was I decided to have a go at the balance of my vast gift package from little Miss Lee.

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What with it being Christmas Eve and an absence of electricity, what could have been more inspired than the elegant wax candles.

And so, what with the chandle holders along side, I immediately put one each in the cent of each of the side or end tables on each side of the fireplace, and the room was more beautifully lighted than you can imagine. The big old snowflake was hung from the books shelf just above, and the effect in that soft light was marvelous.

Cloud coverage had been the obtaining atmospheric situation in late afternoon, but along about 9, the sky cleared and the moon was lovely. The Campbells came, bring three ancient ladies with them, and I did not put the lights on the the gardens, as the moon was altogether adequate and over so much more charming.

We had a pleasant sitting, and as they had brought much wet groceries and potato chips and such like to go with the beverages, everything went off delightfully. A little before midnight, I responded to a tap on the door, --a wayfarer in search of Christmas cheer of the whthal to obtain some, and I took that opportunity to illumine the Chapel. After returning to my guests, I suggested we retire or repair to the sanctuary of the Blessed Martin. The white garden looked so lovely in the moonlight, and then, as the doors of the Chapel swung open, there was another variation of golden light from the altar and the wall brackets on each side of St. Veronic's veil. I closed the doors behind us, and our little service was touchingly simple and intimate. It seemed as much like a true midnight Christmas Eve mass as any I can recall. We included a bit of meditation in the service, too, and in which direction my thoughts traveled I need scarcely set down.

And now the guests have all gone back to town and the hour grows late, and I shall accordingly break off at this point. I have left the candles gleaming in the living room while I was chatting with you, and from my desk, I can see the one on the side of the fireplace nearest Grandpere's portrait, and it is really lovely.

And so closes Christmas Eve, and thanks to a flock of circumstances in all of which little Miss Lee is somehow concerned, it has really been one of the happiest I can ever remember. I hope yours, even though hurly-burly, has given you an opportunity for one little catching of the breath, too....

5844

5844

Kate Smith

12/12
King Solomon

Christmas Night, 1952.

Memorandum:

Long have I liked December 24th better than December 25th. However, Christmas Eve and Christmas night are pretty much alike as favorite segments of each day. My door is closed for the last time tonight. Peace reigns. This is our coveted opportunity for a little chat, after which I shall read a couple of pages from "Denmark Is A Lovely Land" --a book I like very much, and after that and a warm bath, there'll be a dab of fruit cake, a glass of port, candle light within balancing the moonlight flooding the white garden and an endless musicale that will stress mein lieber Peter Illyovitch and the Reverend von Beethoven and a large slice of Wolfgang, --and that will culminate Christmas.

I have thought of you so frequently today, wondering how things were going and if you were able to discover in old Santa's stocking just a brief segment of time allotted exclusively for little Miss Lee to dispose of just as she pleased.

I shall go into the disagreeable aspect of the day first. The Wenks came and Dan. The latter may have spoke to me but if so, I did not hear him. He's so often like that, although, by some strange quirk, at such times, if the Wenks chance to be about, he falls over himself to be gracious to them although he may have frozen them when last there was a contact.

Sister was drinking a little, --not much, -- but enough to further dislocate her addled brain. We got through dinner without incident but immediately afterward she denounced me for speaking to either of the ladies across the fence, calling them all the unpleasant names she had vomited forth on her last go-round. She had telephoned J. H. last week end, saying she wanted to know if the J. M. Henrys were coming, for if so, she certainly wasn't going to put in an appearance. Today, in her mad tirade, she pointed out her vast disappointment at the way things had conspired to ruin her day, for she can down only because she hoped to see Joe, "the darling boy whom I haven't seen since Mother's death."

I can think of nothing quite so trying as having to remain patient when tangled up with lunatics. And that ends that part of the day, for they took off in a huff a half hour after dinner.

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The morning was very pleasant, --rather frosty but radiantly bright. Quite a few of my Cane River and Little River friends dropped by to wish me a Merry Christmas and partake of a spot of wine. In the order of their appearance, the list ran something like Peter, Sam Peace, Robert and Clyde Anthony, Andy, Orellia, Beau Mack, Dee-Dee Anthony, Olyte Gallien, Smith Peace, the Dark Duke, Puny, Murrell Gallien, Ezra, the two secretaries, Dooley, three youths I seem to know but whose names I don't, three or four representatives of the two unrelated Brown families, Earle Breux in from House and Elam Brown from the same place and some of the Little River Demos, none of whose names I can recall except Sweetmilk, and he was the only one who didn't make it.

Thus ran the morning and the afternoon was a shambles, since I had a splitting headache which I liked to attribute not to morning wine but to the insane performances of the white folks.

And then there were some telephone calls, morning and evening, --including one from the Campbells, saying they would get down tomorrow, and a few invitations to open house in town this evening and three invitations for supper, --transportation thrown in.

I supped with Celeste, Madam Regard and J. H. it was quiet and peaceful and wonderfully beneficial to the headache somehow. The ladies spoke of their gifts from little Miss Lee and were altogether delighted with them. If your ears burned at the time, it was because such nice things were being said about you.

Lestan was so entranced with the thoughtfulness shown in the provision that had been made on his behalf for Madam Regard that he felt it much better to leave the gift, so deftly wrapped, just as it was and merely adding the lady's name as from him. I looked wise when Madam Regard mentioned how pleased she was with it and naturally I was consumed with gratitude to you for having handled all this business so much to everyone's satisfaction.

I should fail in giving a complete picture of major points of Christmas cheer at Lucca if I failed to mention what a busy time our feathered friends had at the bar and ball with their holiday seeds and the suet ball which, I believe is styled a Peanut Ball. Whatever its composition, its appeal has been tremendous, and many a little head was tucked under many a little wing tonight, dreaming on a much fuller little stomach, thanks to just one soul.

Thus was Christmas until now. I enclose this with my memo of yesterday which couldn't be mailed today.....

5846

Mary Rhodes
12/27

Friday, December 26th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find the cherubs strumming madly on the harp in today's post.

It was so good to find your card and your nice letter, --another holiday surprise for which I was quite unprepared, but very capable of enjoying but thoroughly.

Wasn't it luck that you had such an excellent excuse to get out of attending the Astor dinner. I reckon you might have seen little Miss Doris if she is still with the organization but one can so readily pass up business associates at pseudo-social gatherings, and I, for one, am all in favor of leaving business associates in a single compartment and going in for social contacts that are not shaped by those whom chance jockeys us into association during our work-a-day hours.

Of course the pandemonium of the family gatherings that must have been awaiting you could be readily passed up, too, and I am not sure, if one had to make a choice between the one brand of inconvenience or the other, which might be the better choice, but I'm certainly glad you didn't have to undertake both.

I ran through a bit of mail, several cards being set aside for subsequent sharing, although at the moment they are mixed up with those being held for addresses, and so it may be some time before anything is sent along.

I had a flock of pilgrims this morning, getting rid of them just as the dinner bell was tapping, and before I had finished my demi-tasse, the Campbells came. Whatever their motives may be for dragging three elderly ladies with them with them, I wouldn't attempt to guess, save that they are trying to give them a pleasant holiday outing, but five inclines toward a crowd so far as my way of touring goes, and while I sent Junior Fugabou out on the Cane River with Mr. Campbell, the ladies and I did a Cane River tour of old houses, but naturally I wouldn't take them in to see the mistresses of Beaufort or Oakland.

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still they had quite a pleasant party, I believe. It was almost first dark before we returned here and I introduced them to Celeste and Madam Regard and then handed them to their car declining to accept their invitation to dine with them in town. I should have been less tired and definitely in the frame of mind to accompany the lady and the gentleman, but five were too many, and especially as they all would have undoubtedly brought me back home later tonight, and that would have been a little too much.

Except for one car wreck by a family of color quite capable of buying cars, --the Joneses, --there were no major scuffles throughout the Christmas festivities. About 2 this morning, Bill Jones' son, a youth of 18 or so, had just taken his cousin to her home, --the Compton place next to the old Jean Baptiste Metoyer place, and was heading back home along the other side of the river. When he got in front of the Church of St. Augustin, or perhaps in front of the Rectory, the car hit a tree on the bank and dropped the 20 foot space below, settling into the water so that only the outline of the top of the car could be seen. There it remained submerged until late this morning when it was hauled out and carted away, a complete wreck. The coat the boy was wearing was pinned so tight to the seat by the twisted steel of the front or top that even after the car had been jacked up into the road by the wreck, the coat could not be pulled out and it was only after the car had been taken to town and a blow torch applied that the garment could be extricated. As for the youth who was alone in the car, he didn't suffer a scratch and has no idea as to what happened or how he escaped, not even knowing if he was thrown out of the car before it submerged or what. All he recalls is that he started to light a cigarette as he was driving along, and assumes he must have been going faster than he realized. It seems a miracle he should have survived.

One of the most remarkable reactions to Christmas appeared about dawn in the words of Andy who tapped on my door, asking me if I would write a letter for him. I would. He drew from his pocket a thin package which turned out to be a Christmas card, which he had neatly wrapped in brown paper so it wouldn't get soiled. I suppose Andy is 40 or 45, -- he himself doesn't know. It is difficult to imagine and yet this was the first Christmas card he had ever received. On Wednesday Mrs. Coombs and Mr. Woods drove down from town to pay a little call across the fence and at Yucca. On leaving she handed me several envelopes she wished me to hand to different people on the place, and Andy was one. He unfolded it with loving care, drew out a card from the envelope, and pointing to the dollar bill and the reading, he explained that it was a message which said that lady wanted him to have a happy Christmas and a straight t

5848

Sunday, December 28th, 1952.

Memorandum:

All week end, I have kept finding myself wondering how the mid holiday week end has been turning in your neighborhood.

I hope there have been a couple of moments of rest, but I can't figure out how that possible could be achieved.

At this bend of the river, Saturday was a shambles of people, but as the Shreveport contingent never showed up, it was altogether pleasant but mildly enervating. From 6 in the morning until seven at night, I didn't find myself alone for a split second. There were quite a few pilgrims, a few friends and a lot of scurrying around to not much point. I was entranced at the opportunity to fall into bed and sleep slap through without awakening until 6 this morning.

But today I got a break. Only a few of Celeste's week end guests passed this way and as J. H. was serving as pilot and guide, those tours were breath-taking in brevity.

We dined across the fence and delicious fare and pleasant company, being all about the board, I reckon I ate quite enough to make up for lost food on Christmas day.

From one of my colored friends on Saturday I learned one thing about the Jones automobile accident the other night that I thought you would enjoy. It seems that after the youth extricated himself from the submerged car and had managed to get to shore and up at the top of the bank, he looked back and noticed that by some miracle, the tail light, way down under the water, was still burning, whereupon he retraced his steps and plunge, reached the car and turned off the switch, after which he returned to the bank and, taking the road, went on to the home of a cousin living just above the bridge. Isn't it odd what people do instinctively at such moments of strain?

Celeste told me at dinner that a special mass on behalf of the Jones family had been said at Church this morning in thanksgiving for the youth's escape. The mass did not

5849

include any reference to turning of the switch, I reckon, but the Reverend Father missed a big point right there, it strikes me.

Quite unexpectedly in Saturday's post came a package from Nina, containing a recording of the Listz 2nd and 12th Hungariang numbers which I like ever so much. But I was even more entranced to have her accompanying little note, saying that she is back home again. I had taken a chance on a letter reaching her in Corpus Christi, and had posted one last week to her Carancahua (what a name!) address, and I reckon she probably received it about the time her message came to hand. I shall be looking for a letter from her before long, although, if memory serves, she isn't given to writing often and her letters are usually on the short side. Still it is good to know she is back and now if we can just get some kind of a sign of life from those naughty little girls off yonder in Waco, we ought to have the major portion of our old-time acquaintances accounted for. A little note from Ray O'Brien came to hand, too, and a little note from La Storm, along with a lovely soft pastel gray-green sweater which I like, too.

I was so glad dinner went off so smoothly across the fence today. Yesterday Celeste's sister and brother-in-law, who are Mr. and Mrs. Roy of Mansura, came up for the week end with three or four of their grown up children. Mr. Roy is an alcoholic but had been on the water wagon for a few weeks, and it was thought all was well. They stopped in Alexandria for a few minutes, however, during which Mr. Roy slipped, arriving here on the high side. This morning he declined going to church and proceeded to find himself something else to get started on forthwith. J. A. brought him to Yucca around 11, thinking a little fresh air might help him to sober up a bit, but it re-acted quite the contrary, apparantly. There were people stopping at Celeste's immediately after Church, --11:15, and somehow Mr. Roy got engineered onto the sleeping porch and there he dozed until the other cocktail guests had departed and dinner was finished. Naturally, I withdrew immediately as I realized he was about to put in an appearance, so that only the family were about. He is a very pleasant little man and they say he is possessed of an excellent mind, --but for years he hasn't had much opportunity to let it function. --up-be-fuddled. Fortunately, J. A. who never touches a drop, is most charitable about people who do, but even so it must have been rather unpleasant for all the kin folk. And so runs out this week end and a new week begins. May rest be among the nice things the new one may bring you.....

5850

Mrs. Lorene Johnson
Dec.

Monday, December 29th, 1952.

Memorandum:

The hour is nine and I reckon the egg-nog is as oozing merrily across the fence. "Mais, moi, je suis ici pour chanter sur la paille".

Celeste, poor dear, twice invited me to come over for a little while, and I said, "Oh, Thank You", and I reckon she knew I wouldn't be showing up.

I have no doubt there is probably a gay gathering of plantation gentry, including the Joyous Coast and as far in the opposite direction as Magnolia, for Attala is down from Washi g-ton and she usually makes the egg-nog party at Melrose each year. And there will be the Reverend Fathers, too, I suppose, and some of the Prudhomes, Cloutiers and Lambres, and I shall be quite contented to hear all about it on the morrow. Besides that gives me an opportunity to sit by my own fire side, enjoy a page or two about Denmark, and revel in the lovely glow of the white tapers as I have a go at a dab of fruit cake and a glass of port. Frankly, I could relish an egg-nog but the price to be paid in chatter is too high for my slim purse of patience.

I was glad to see Lillian Richell this afternoon. She came with her daughter and son-in-law, --the latter from Mineral Wells, Texas, or some such place, so ewhere West of Dallas or Fort Worth or some such.

She didn't have much news but did volunteer the information that she had seen Sister a week ago and that the latter had expressed vast affection for me but contempt for Adam Regard. That was a week ago. She said she had experienced a little difficulty socially a few months back when she had voiced the opinion that she would take to the big road in a day or two, and this at some gathering attended by Sister who immediately asked her if she would drive her to Briarwood. But, as Lillian explained, Caroline had already laid down a firm dictum that nobody was ever to bring Sister to Briarwood, and so there was a go-round of refusals, explanations, misunderstandings and the Lord knows what all, and Lillian never did take her but Sister went by herself, or at least so Lillian understood.

0282

5851

On the home front there was the sound of artillery both yesterday morning and this morning. Yesterday J. H. shot an old sow that was rooting up gardenias and today Celeste sent Mitchell, the Axe, to fetch a rifle to kill the big old wild yellow cat that tore up Grandpa last summer and was working on Celeste cat today. The animal lives in the bamboo hedge and is difficult to sight when searching for him. But it is rather funny to send a person of color for a gun to kill a cat. Mitchell shot twice but anybody could have predicted that neither shot would come within yards of the mark, for all people of color fear bad luck will result from killing any kind of a cat tame or untame, and so the yellow panther still roams at large in the bush.

But perhaps there was some slight advantage in the fireworks, for tonight along about first dark, Grandpa and Die Frau were in an unending frolic up and down the gallery, playing with their Santa Claus catnip mouse, and at such an hour they usually are not in a playful mood, for then it is that the wild beast is want to start out on a prowl, and both animals, having good sense, incline to keep a sharp eye open, and hold themselves in readiness to take to the tall timbers which usually is one of the cypress posts supporting the gallery.

While the Trichell contingent was present, Junior Fugabou arrived, bringing his sister, Helen, with him. I withdrew from my guests for a few moments to let Helen read me a couple of paragraphs at random from whatever chanced to be to hand. To my utter astonishment, she seemed to know all the words, and moved along like a breeze. I saw her the other day when I took Mr. Campbell over to the camp to have Junior take him fishing and suggested she come by sometime soon with her brother. This will be a great blessing if Helen can assist me with some of the scads of letters and notes that are piled up from the holiday on-slaught, but like Emma Lee I suppose she, too, will be sailing off in an elopement just about the time we get the first Christmas card to hand. But sufficient unto the day is the elopement thereof, or how ever the Bible phrases it.

It is always good to receive letters such as the enclosed, since it is through such communications that we get a clearer impression of the average pilgrim's concept of local sagging of civilization that would likely to be forthcoming from conversation. Although I do recall with amusement the gentleman from Indianapolis, passing this way a few months back, just after the cotton hulls had been distributed about the roots of the rarer plants and how he expressed the thought that the place would look quite nice if all the trash could be raked off and grass be permitted to flourish at the base of all the shrubs and trees. So many ideas, so many without any merit at all.

0282

5852

Tuesday, December 30th, 1952.

Memorandum: Submitter requests that to be kept in the collection of the University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.

How nice to find your letter of the 23rd in today's post.

The picture you sketched of your busy day at the office is charming and I am glad you found everything in the package alright.

You were quite correct regarding the gourds as having come into being a little piece up the road. That they still retain their green tinge seems odd, for they were harvested and placed in the sun to dry three or four weeks ago, but they still seem far from the mummy state.

And you were also quite right about the laurel as being from slap in front of the big iron pot. That they still contained a certain fragrance sufficient to be noticeable on opening the package moves me to try my hand at making a "rose jar" out of them, even though my success with the butterfly lily department was indifferent enough. Possibly with more basic material to hold the fragrance, we shall have better luck on this try. I'll report what progress is being made from time to time.

I learned from J. A. at the store this morning that the egg-nog last night was a success. I was surprised to learn that he participated. But the social whirl seems to be wearing the hostess down and I learned from her mother this afternoon that there was quite an emotional storm at dinner today, with much denouncing of mother and servant until J. A., for the first time in his life, put a foot down and declared that such unfairness was definitely out of order.

For the balance of the afternoon, Celeste was at the big house, putting on final touches in preparation for the advent of the two sets of Baton Rouge Henrys, scheduled to arrive to morrow and remain no longer than Thursday, I hope.

After that, the social season ought to level off a little, and as the San Francisco hejira gets under way on the 20th, a measure of peace ought to be upon us as the Chinese magnolias, --already in an "interesting condition", -- move toward coming into full flower by the end of the month. I must write to Rosalind Aswell and advise her of the impending floral parade so she may round up her paint pots and have a go at things.

5853

Your reference to the spirit of Concorde and the Taylor port that is brewed from grapes of that vintage reminds me to mention a very interesting account in "Denmark is a lovely Land" of the famous Cherry Brandy which Denmark, or one of its oldest houses exports. I am sure you have sampled the Cherry Brandy by this house whose name I have forgotten, although its pronunciation sounds like "Hearing" or some such. Well do I recall the marvelous flavor which this brand possesses, and according to the book on Denmark, the process and the business has been in the same family since the early 1800's, although, by much longevity in that succession of generations, only 4 succeeding heads of the clan have presided over its destinies, which really seems quite remarkable for such a long span. The part I liked, too, is the fact that the originator of the business was a poor youth, apprenticed to a grocer at a tender age and because he was such a nice child, the grocer's wife mothered him and eventually gave him a secret formula for cherry brandy which, in time, the boy began manufacturing on his own hook and with such a success that he eventually had ocean going ships whose prime cargo was his brandy. I liked it, too, that the elegant old house this same man bought in Copenhagen, still serves as general residence, office, etc., of this highly successful enterprise. That fact, alone, seems to give a unique distinction to the whole thing, for I doubt if there are many businesses of such age still functioning on both the domestic and business levels in its original setting.

In today's post came the December recorded Talking Book Topics, read by John Knight. It had some good titles but nothing that struck me with much enthusiasm. I shall order "Post-Marked Moscow" or some such, by Mrs. Kirk, wife of the ex-Ambassador. "Guilty or Not Guilty, by Francis A. Bush. This latter item is described as an exhaustive account of four important trials, two of which I never heard of and two which I have, --that of Samuel Insull and Alger Hiss. I am particularly interested in what will be presented in the Hiss matter, since I am still inclined to feel intuitively that the Hiss business is one of the worst trumped-up legal things that have tarnished contemporary courts and politics, not to mention the victim himself. For the life of me, I can't understand why the Parole Board recently turned down the Hiss appeal, since murderers by the dozen seem to be turned loose without the bat of an eyelash. I shouldn't be surprised if we lived to see the day the whole Hiss business is reversed and the victim exonerated.

But I must break off. It has been so nice hearing from you. I hope all is gradually returning to normalcy in your neighborhood....

5854

Wednesday, December 31st, 1952.

Memorandum:

I wonder if you, even as do I, feel just a little nostalgia when writing December 31st for the last time in any year.

Perhaps it is pure sentiment, perhaps something else, --I never did stop to give it much thought. Perhaps it is because no matter how much rattle and bang every yan produces, there are inevitably some pleasant things, too, which we associate with the particular set of figures, and it is that to which we say Goodbye with regret.

And speaking of the rattle and bang section, we started off the day with quite a liberal dose of the stuff. Following yesterday's nerve spree across the fence, Aurellia didn't show up this morning. This evoked a new set of nerves and it was countered by a sentence: "You are the dumbest person I ever saw", which is just another way of saying that when I arrived, by request, tears cascaded on my shoulders madly.

What made this particular day excellent in effectiveness for the disappearing act is the fact that the two sets of S. G.'s were scheduled to arrive, --as they actually did, --this afternoon, and as at least one set will be house guests in the home without a servant, the loss will be doubly impressive.

After a couple or three inches of rain during the last 36 hours, today dawned cloudless, giving me an opportunity to do much pulling and hauling about in the damp earth. The thermometer was in the 50s, making the sunshine welcome as a warming agent, and what with lots of ozone in the air, I felt much vim and vigor to attack a half dozen odds and ends I had been waiting to attend to following the advent of the winter season.

While it occurs to me, I want to remark that the Talking Book Topics asked its readers for a preference as to the recording of some magazine, as, for instance, Fortune, and I'm casting about in my mind as to which one I think would sit me best, --certainly not Fortune. If you have any ideas on the subject, I shall welcome them. Of course Readers Digest is already being set forth in records, but an additional one is what is contemplated.

5855

5855

I have read a few more pages from the Denmark book and found the several references to Old Age Pensions extremely interesting. The author opines that in contrast to Denmark, the United States is about 50 years behind schedule in this matter as it is in Health Insurance as well. The data presented and the conclusions reached are something to bear in mind when your friend, Senator R.A.T., talks about putting the train back on the track of 20 years ago and the American Medical Association begins beating its drum about "free enterprise".

In view of the tremendous amount of propaganda the A. M. A. puts out to retain the primordial conditions in the field of money making at the expense of human suffering, it seems to me high time some one of the great Foundations, such as Rockefeller, doesn't allot a vast sum of money for counter-propaganda for the common welfare.

Tonight's news speaks of snow, sleet and slush in Times Square and I find myself hoping you are among those who are snug by a friendly fireside at home. It never was quite clear to me just what impelled thousands of people to congregate in mid winter in such a drafty place as Times Square, but I suppose there must be some satisfaction in being pushed about and stepped on that I have never learned to appreciate.

To my regret, my new secretary seems to be following the usual pattern of all rural secretaries, --forgetting to show up. It chanced that all of today's incoming mail was long hand which seemed utterly beyond the powers of the two secretaries who appeared. Junior Fugabon said his sister would pass this way a little later. Seven hours have elapsed and something tells me he would have been correct if he had said she would show up next year. At such times, I am inclined to think that one reason why wages in this section must of necessity be on a low level is due to the fact that one must inevitably make provision for at least two people to do a job which could easily be managed by a single individual, --except that the single individual is bound to fulfill his duties on a hit-or-miss basis, thus necessitating a double at all times if one hopes to have the services of one.

So turns the season and so ends 1952 and 1953 makes its bow. I am grateful to God for 1952 and for the little Miss Lee who made its living worth while. Full well do you know what my sentiments are regarding all good things that may be yours in the impending '53.....